



CLARA LEICESTER.

A NOVEL.

BY

CAPTAIN G. DE LA POER BERESFORD.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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CLARA LEICESTER.

CHAPTER I.

THE SISTERS.

“REALLY, Duchess, the *Sombrero* becomes you wonderfully ! How astonished would the Belgravians be, to see your Grace riding down Rotten Row in such a head-dress !”

“Indeed ! I am glad you approve. This time our tastes agree. I could easily retort the last part of your observation, by saying, How surprised the Pallmallian exquisites would be to see Lord Sidney Tresham up at six o’clock !”

“Capital, though severe!” observed his Lordship. “But such a surprise, I guess, is not in store for them. Be this as it may, you must allow your habit is charming.”

“*On dit*, Do at Rome as the Romans do,” retorted the Duchess. “I accordingly prefer riding in a white habit and *sombrero* to a cloth one and an English hat, having already used them when we journeyed from Malaga to Granada. Though let me add, that our London friends will stand but little chance of seeing me thus attired in the Park.”

“Ha! ha! ha! Good, rather!” exclaimed Lord Sidney Tresham. “But, pray, Duchess, at what hour are we to start?”

“Directly the Duke is ready,” replied her Grace. “The horses and guide are at the door. I wonder what makes my sister Clara so late. She used, on our former journeys, to be the first down.”

“Mrs. Leicester,” said Lord Sidney Tresham,

“is, doubtless, trying on several hats before she can select one to her fancy. She is not so easily pleased as your Grace.”

As he spoke, the door was opened, and a young lady entered the room in a riding-dress. To judge by her appearance, she could scarcely have been her twentieth year. She had, nevertheless, that grave and decided cast of countenance which at once announced, either that she had suffered much from sickness, or that her mind was not at rest.

Clara Delaunay, or Leicester, as she now was, had been married at the early age of sixteen to Mr. Leicester, a country gentleman of considerable wealth. At that time, Clara's father was in great pecuniary difficulties. He therefore urged the marriage without regard to his daughter's feelings, and found himself suddenly extricated from his debts by the intervention of a rich son-in-law, who, for the last two years, had admired the budding beauties of Clara. The young lady,

indeed, was as much a woman then as most others are at a more advanced period. Her appearance was certainly calculated to fascinate the most fastidious connoisseur in female beauty. In figure, she was above the average height; and every movement of her form was graceful and lovely. Her chief attraction, however, consisted in the intellectual, yet melancholy, expression which served to give "*ton*" to her exquisite black eyes and clear complexion. Had she not possessed this last charm, which is almost peculiar to our countrywomen, she would have resembled a Spanish, rather than an English, woman.

Sir George Delaunay (her father) having thus managed to get clear of his debts, and, being of a haughty disposition, soon began to regret the rashness he had committed in forcing his daughter to marry the rich *parvenu*; for Mr. Leicester had only been in the county a short time. Sir George, therefore, vented his

spleen, not only upon his son-in-law but also on his unoffending daughter.

Mr. Leicester, little suspecting that his wealth alone had obtained for him the hand of the beautiful Clara Delaunay, attributed the change in her father's conduct towards him to caprice, which might, in its very nature, speedily assume a kinder aspect. But, no : Sir George's manifestations of dislike were systematical and permanent.

Having committed one act of precipitancy, the baronet determined to atone for it by making a more suitable alliance for his second daughter, Mary, who at this time was "coming out." Accordingly, he took every precaution to prevent her from appearing in society with Mrs. Leicester; and, to accomplish this end, he placed Mary under the care of his sister, Lady Clementsford.

It may seem strange from the above, that none of this match-making business was effected by the mother of the young ladies; nor is it

apparent even that such a person then existed. There was, however, and there was *not*, a Lady Delaunay. She lived, indeed ; but was separated from her husband by mutual agreement ; and to Sir George was consigned the education of his two daughters.

In his youth, Sir George had been forced to study for the church. His father was a bishop ; and, having much patronage, placed his three sons in the holy profession.

At the university, however, an uncontrollable taste for pursuits not congenial with studies in divinity, took possession of Sir George. The turf-mania, with its concomitant vices, such as betting, &c., soon entangled him in debts which led to desperate measures for extrication. These, however, in time, trebled his original liabilities, ~~so~~ that the consequences grew worse and worse each year.

On entering the church, the young man took especial care to conceal such deplorable facts

from his father's knowledge ; and so well did he succeed, that he was soon presented with one of the finest livings in Devonshire, the income accruing from which was sufficient for his present comforts. But, as he did not live a very clerical life, he found he could get on much in the same style as when he was at Oxford, and visit Paris and the other fashionable Continental cities as regularly as any of his gay associates.

At length, however, he became a married man. This change had the effect of abating his dissipation, and keeping him more at home. His wife, being of a quiet and religious turn of mind, the young couple resided at the husband's living until Sir George's father died, and he succeeded to his landed property, on part of which he now took up his abode, retaining, nevertheless, his living in Devonshire. But, in process of time, finding himself gradually getting clear of his debts incurred at college (in liquidating which he was assisted by the marriage, or rather "sa-

crifice," as he afterwards called it, of his eldest daughter,) he resigned his rectory, and turned his thoughts exclusively to the securing a brilliant alliance for Mary, who at this period was figuring in the *beau-monde*.

Great, therefore, was his joy upon arriving in town, to find that his schemes had succeeded; for Lady Clementsford delighted him with the intelligence that his daughter was upon the eve of becoming a duchess.

"Not, perhaps," added her Ladyship, "so young a husband as most girls might desire; but I am glad to acquaint you that, from my experience of Mary, she is more alive to her own interest than we could expect; and, in willingly and at once accepting the Duke of Ellingfield, she evinced a prudence far beyond her years, and very different, I think, from what Clara would have demonstrated in a similar position. But what is done, must remain; and so, my dear brother, I must again felicitate you on my niece's

prospects ; for, to tell you the truth, we have fixed the day without consulting you."

Sir George was too much gratified to find any fault with this arrangement. Accordingly, the match took place, and Mary Delaunay became Duchess of Ellingfield, the rage and fashion for a little while, and a mother in less than a year.

The birth of the Marquis of Safie, together with the gaiety of the preceding season, having greatly impaired the mother's health, she determined to pass the winter in a warmer climate than the Highlands, where her husband's castle was situated ; and, in order to please the Duke, selected Malta, as being an English possession. To the Continent his Grace had a decided objection.

All was soon arranged ; and, at Clara's own request, the Duchess consented to take her sister with her.

When Mrs. Leicester informed her husband

of her wish to go abroad, he replied in a manner which will show upon what terms this couple lived.

“ You may go anywhere you please,” said he ; “ but of course you do not expect me to be dancing after your heels at all the places abroad which you may choose to select for your abode. I must also inform you, that your present allowance must suffice, especially as I will not consent to your taking my children to such an execrable climate as that of Malta.”

Clara rejoined with a deep sigh, that her present allowance of five hundred pounds a-year was perfectly sufficient ; and as to her taking the children with her, she had never dreamt of such a proceeding. “ Indeed,” continued she, “ I am so accustomed to be parted from them, that for a few months, more or less, I should not feel the difference. I am satisfied, as long as they remain with your sister, Mrs. Abbot.”

“A fortunate circumstance,” observed Mr. Leicester; “for I have no intention of removing them from my sister’s house; and so, my dear, I suppose this is to be our parting. You are perfectly aware how to draw your money; and as for letters, I will not diminish your already small income by my unamusing communications.”

Clara was too much accustomed to such cold speeches to be mortified by this last specimen. Her heart, moreover, felt greatly relieved at the prospect of passing the next six months with her sister, whom she tenderly loved, and of whom, since her marriage, she had seen a great deal; for, though vanity was conspicuous in the character of the Duchess, she had by nature a tolerably good heart, and therefore reciprocated her sister’s love. In addition to this, she was perfectly aware of Clara’s great attractions, both mental and physical, and could not but feel that she was an acquisition to her house in

town. Besides, the gentleness of Clara made her a delightful companion.

Mrs. Leicester, on her own part, had also powerful reasons to wish to be with the Duchess. Since her ill-starred marriage, she had been almost entirely excluded from the society of her relations, especially that of her aunt, Lady Clementsford, who, having the charge of Mary with the avowed intention of effecting a brilliant alliance for her, imagined it would be prejudicial to her schemes to entertain at her house the more beautiful sister. Clara was therefore never received into her aunt's presence. But after Mary's marriage with the Duke of Ellingfield, this arrangement ceased ; and when residing with the Duchess, Clara felt at perfect liberty, and was restored to all her connections, by every one of whom she was affectionately welcomed, particularly by her cousin, Grace Dalzell, whom she could now see as often as she pleased.

How different from this was the joyless house

of her husband, where apathy was relieved only by reproof and covert insult ! In the malicious ingenuity of Mr. Leicester, nothing was omitted which could mortify his wife. Of the society of her equals she had none, nor could she take the least interest in the talk of the country squires and their dames invited to the house by Mr. Leicester, who insisted on remaining in the country during the whole of summer—that season devoted in London to the gaieties of fashionable circles. Oh, how Clara longed to be there ! Her allowance did not enable her to keep an establishment of her own ; and she decidedly refused all inducements to visit her husband's relations unless she might take her two children with her, which he never would permit.

Grace Dalzell and Clara had been brought up together in early youth, and were sent to the same school ; for Grace's mother emphatically maintained that a good school expanded the

ideas of a girl, and taught her something of life, though on a small scale ; and as Sir George Delaunay could not afford a governess on his establishment, an efficient and aristocratic place of education at Bath was selected by Lady Clementsford for her daughter and niece.

Fortune had smiled upon Lord Clementsford.

Being the younger son of a younger son, a commission had been presented to him, and he was compelled to fight his way through the world. He had served in the Peninsula ; and not only behaved most gallantly, but by chance had been placed in a critical position immediately on his landing in Portugal, from which he extricated himself and saved the division he was commanding. From this time he rapidly rose in his profession, and at last arrived at the rank of General, &c. &c. ; followed by his elevation to the peerage. As if Fortune could not be tired of lavishing kindness on her favourite, he unexpectedly succeeded to the valuable estates of a

distant cousin ; so that, in addition to his numerous English and foreign pensions, he enjoyed an income of twenty thousand a-year.

Whether even this revenue to a peer with more than two country seats to keep up, and a fashionable and plotting wife, who, as already said, had a house in town, was more than a competency, or quite adequate to the demands on it, may be questioned. Still Lord Clementsford frequently boasted that he did not owe a shilling in the world ; and, as a rule, insisted upon her Ladyship never incurring debts for more than a few months. Their house in London was kept up in no extravagant or profuse style ; and although Grace Dalzell was the sole heiress of her father's property, more attention than was bestowed on other young ladies in as high a position, was not paid to her as a *grand parti*.

Besides those afforded by the seclusion of a school, Grace had had frequent opportunities of

indulging her retiring and quiet tastes ; for, oftentimes in the vacation, Lady Clementsford was abroad, and committed the care of her daughter generally to her brother, Sir George.

In this manner, Clara Delaunay and Grace Dalzell had been brought up together, and had formed a real and sincere affection for each other.

When, therefore, Clara married, and Grace remained a year longer at the school, she only missed her friend, but never thought of replacing her by another.

It now became too palpable to the superintendent of the "*pension*," that her "*pensionnaire*" was too old to remain any longer with her ; and she suggested this to his Lordship during one of Lady Clementsford's emigrations. The result was, that Grace was removed from the school and installed at Dalzell Park during the absence of her mother, who, when she returned, was certainly mortified to find herself supplanted by her young and beautiful daughter ; for Lady

Clementsford had been a celebrated beauty: In Paris she still received the homage due to her superior charms, and never mentioned her daughter but as her *infant* child.

Lady Clementsford, however, was a perfect woman of the world ; and seeing that in London there was no use in disguising her daughter's age, determined to sacrifice herself for the benefit of her child. She therefore turned her attention to the *début* of Grace ; for, with her usual discretion, she perceived that as to her education and accomplishments, very little had been left undone. Everything was prepared ; and the excitement being over, the *débutante* was added to the already-swelled lists of marriageable daughters.

During two seasons, however, Grace remained without an offer, much, of course, to Lady Clementsford's vexation of spirit ; but she contrived in the intervals between each London season, to visit Paris, and alone. Lady Cle-

mentsford always remembered that her daughter was an heiress, and therefore consented to receive Mary Delaunay, and managed to get her married. The Duke of Ellingfield would not have suited Grace Dalzell; neither was Lady Clementsford ambitious of having a *son-in-law* old enough to be her brother.

When the Duchess proposed to take her sister abroad, great was the affliction of Grace Dalzell and Clara at the thought of parting; but, upon reflection, Grace became sensible of the important benefit it would be to Clara to live with the Duke and Duchess for some time.

The growing indifference of Mr. Leicester to his wife was perceptible to every one; but the world takes little trouble to ascertain the causes of domestic quarrels, of which the real origin is scarcely ever detected.

Whether right or wrong, in nine cases out of ten, in our land of liberty, the woman, however blameless, is visited with the censures of society,

should any misunderstanding arise between her and her lord and master.

The young and fascinating Duchess then, independently of the great respect in which the Duke was held, was of too great consideration not to impart to her sister a considerable portion of her own prestige ; and this was so strongly urged by Grace, that Mrs. Leicester soon began to regard a tour with the Duke and Duchess as one of the greatest advantages that could possibly have occurred to her.

A promise of uninterrupted correspondence reconciled Grace Dalzell and Clara Leicester to their temporary separation.

CHAPTER II.

A ROAD ADVENTURE.

OUR travellers had now passed a winter at Malta, and the whole party were "*en route*" back to England. Having, however, determined to visit the south of Spain on their way home, they rested at Gibraltar as a good starting-place for their contemplated excursion into the interior of Andalusia.

Lord Sidney Tresham accompanied the travellers on their departure from Malta. He was the youngest brother of the Marquis of Selton,

and, being related to the Duchess and Mrs. Leicester, had been solicited to join their party.

The short dialogue at the commencement of these pages, took place in the Club Hotel at Gibraltar, where the Duke had been located for some time. The hour was indeed early for such a party; but they found travelling early and resting two or three hours in the middle of the day, by far the most sensible mode of journeying; and, with the exception of Lord Sidney, the rest of the party had performed an equestrian journey from Malaga to Granada, for in most parts of Spain there is no choice of conveyance—all must ride. The Duchess, therefore, on the morning in question, was suitably equipped.

Soon after Mrs. Leicester entered the room, and when the common-place salutations were over, the Duke returned, bringing with him Mr. Henry Greville, whom he begged to introduce to his wife and Mrs. Leicester as their second cousin. Mr. Greville had only recently arrived at Gibraltar,

and was kindly invited by his Grace to go with them to Ronda. The request was willingly acceded to, and Mr. Greville joined their party.

“The guide and horses are already at the door,” said the Duke; “and so, ladies, if you are ready, I will despatch a cup of coffee, and join you instanter.”

This refreshment was also taken by the rest of the company, and then they descended the stairs, where they found Captain Fearon, the governor’s aide de-camp, who, having learnt from Mr. Greville the time of their departure, had most civilly risen to escort them a few miles on the road.

Such marked attention and respect as this being in no way expected or necessary, the Duke, while expressing his full appreciation of the kindness intended, endeavoured to dissuade Captain Fearon from so troublesome an undertaking. However, he assisted the Duchess to mount; and after a short delay, the party, accompanied by the aide-de-camp, were actually

en route. They passed along the main street, the horses' hoofs clattering an echo through the narrow and silent thoroughfare at this early hour. Though now so tranquil, how clamorous would it be in a few short hours !

The fair at Ronda is held annually in the month of May. Besides the usual excitement, the interest was this year greatly increased by Montez, the celebrated matador, announcing that this year he intended to take his farewell of the *Rondēnos*, and, indeed, of all the Andalusian provinces.

English people—especially those who are accustomed to the life of London—know too accurately what the “farewell” of a celebrated performer is, to feel any keen interest in witnessing such a mockery. The different *annonces* of Rubini's farewell, Taglioni's last appearance, and Mrs. Nisbett's positive retirement from the stage, are each received with apathy by the English. In Spain, perhaps, the good folks are more gullible.

After passing the gates of Gibraltar, and looking up with amazement at the wonderful galleries, or batteries, excavated in the solid rock, the tourists arrived at the Spanish Lines, the real commencement of Spain. A search of the mules that conveyed their baggage was here effected; but the scrutiny was not a strict one, and caused but little delay. The presence of the English aide-de-camp, who was in uniform, greatly facilitated matters.

The few miles of sand were rapidly crossed, for they intended to rest an hour at San Roque. The guide, being of no use as far as this little town (because every inch of the road was familiar to each of the party), was left to come on slowly with the laden mules, and the friends soon reached San Roque, a semi-English place, where they alighted and ordered breakfast, after which, hearing that the mules and guide had come up, the journey was resumed. The tourists now parted from Captain Fearon, whose duty

obliged him to return to the garrison prison, "old Gib."

The cavalcade took the following order : first, rode Nicolo, the guide, followed by two mules, which carried the baggage and provisions ; for in Andalusia, even an English duke cares little for external show. There, the peasantry are the true nobility, both in appearance and manners. Absence of pride was a remarkable *trait* in the Duke of Ellingfield's character. His benignity and condescension to any one he was addressing in a less exalted rank of life, in no manner lessened the respect due to his high position. He was beloved and respected.

The Duke and Duchess now rode together with Henry Grenville on her Grace's right ; then came Mrs. Leicester and Lord Sidney Tresham. Two servants, both natives of the Rock, followed, and constituted the whole party.

The road, on first leaving San Roque, is pretty and truly Spanish, bordered with the

orange-tree and aloe ; but soon it became very bad, and the paths so narrow, that the travellers could only proceed one by one. They soon reached the summit of a hill, from which they could discern the first pass of the Sierra. The interval between them and the mountain was entirely covered with brushwood and small trees ; and the rough back-ground formed a bold, but wild, view.

The Duchess was riding with Mr. Greville as they descended the hill ; and her Grace, pointing with her whip to the pass, exclaimed, "What a shelter for a band of robbers those thick, brown trees would be ! I really am rather alarmed, for we are in Spain."

"There is not much chance of an adventure now-a-days so near Gibraltar," replied Mr. Greville ; "but you see, nevertheless, I am armed." And he produced a pistol from his saddle-bags.

Here, in a short time, occurred an adventure, which, although mingled with a great deal of

amusement, occasioned considerable inconvenience ; and might have been attended with serious consequences.*

The guide, who was some way in advance, suddenly stopped and appeared as if conversing with some passer-by. The man with whom he was thus engaged, was in a peasant's dress. The mules also stopped, apparently for the purpose of resting ; until, at length, the party rode up, and then perceived, for the first time, several men in the bushes, all dressed in the ordinary country garments, viz., jackets, breeches, fajas (scarfs), yellow gaiters, and sombreros. This costume, together with their concealed position and their having fire-arms, induced the suspicion that they were bandits.

As none of the party spoke Spanish sufficiently well to keep up a conversation—and before

* The adventure here related really happened to a party travelling in Spain this year ; and all the circumstances are perfectly true.

the guide could enter into any explanation— Lord Sidney, who was a short way behind, rode smartly up to Henry Greville, and exclaimed— “ Give me a pistol.”

A discussion, whether it was prudent to carry arms, had taken place upon leaving Gibraltar, by which it appeared that Mr. Greville was the only one that had them about his person.

When Lord Sidney asked for a pistol, the word, which is much the same as in Spanish, was understood by the man who appeared to be the chief of the gang, and who instantly loaded his musket and covered his lordship before he could get the pistol out of the saddle-bags, vociferating, “ *Quiere V^{md} una pistola ?*” * adding, that if he even touched the horse of his friend he would fire. Two other men also covered him, and, with their fingers on the triggers, only waited for the slightest aggressive movement to pull them. Considering

* “ Do you ask for a pistol ?”

the short distance, and the rough ground, a stone slipping from under the feet of one of the men would have brought Lord Sidney's career to a close.

The chief, by way of consolation, told the English gentlemen that he could hit a sombrero at two hundred yards off. The joke becoming unpleasant, and the ladies evincing alarm, although throughout the affair they had preserved much presence of mind, Mr. Greville endeavoured to pacify the "Don Quijote," by pointing out to him his situation.

They now learnt from the guide that the men were "Carabineros de la Reyna," and placed there to apprehend smugglers. Of course, this intelligence was highly satisfactory ; as the Duke supposed, that when an explanation ensued, and the passports should be seen, no further delay would occur.

But he was miserably deceived ; for, after searching their horses and persons for pistols,

and taking away the only two they found, they informed the guide that the party might resume its journey ; but that the baggage-mules must return to Algeziras, a town distant about twelve miles from their present position. This, although disagreeable, was at last after some deliberation consented to. They felt convinced moreover, that the Spanish general, as soon as he learned who they were, would assist them.

Judge of their discomfiture, then, when the chief—who, by the bye, was only a corporal, by his own admission—said, he must take the two gentlemen prisoners, one for having the pistols in his possession, and the other for demanding them.

This man evidently overstepped his orders, for he refused to look at the passport ; and, for all he knew, the Duke's party might have had permission to carry fire-arms, which circumstance he did not endeavour to ascertain.

The guide asked permission to return to “ San

Roque," distant only four miles ; but this was refused. The Duke therefore took the ladies there, and returned to the rest of the party to share their fate.

Upon arriving at Algeziras, Mr. Greville, together with his Grace, called upon the Spanish General, Juan de Lara, who, on hearing of the proceeding, was greatly annoyed, and sent for the Colonel of the Carabineros. But, not to detain them any longer, (the party having lost much time already), gave them an order to the corporal, who had halted some way out of the town of Algeziras.

Mr. Greville thanked the general for his politeness, and having explained who the duke was, they departed, taking the order for their release, of which the following is a translation :—

“ The carbineers, who have detained the baggage of these English officers, will return it

immediately to the interested party, in order that they may continue their journey to Ronda. The same will prevent others from taking anything more from English officers, and inform them not to detain in any manner, during the time of the fair at Ronda, the effects of British officers.

“JUAN DE LARA.

“They will also restore the pistols.”

On receiving this letter, the corporal turned livid with rage ; but dared not disobey the well-known signature. He even hesitated ; and with a bad grace restored the pistols. To verify his assertion about the precision of his aim, he fired at a flying gull, and missed it, but by very little. The circumstance, however, clearly showed what the fate of Lord Sidney would have been had he taken the pistol from the saddle-bags.

The day was too far advanced to think of reaching Gaucin, their intended resting-place.

Besides, the agitation of the ladies was considerable ; so they all returned to San Roque, where they found themselves most comfortably housed.

The next morning their journey was resumed upon the track of the preceding day, but our party met with no further opposition. Continuing their route, they soon arrived at a romantic dell in the cork wood, where was stationed a party of cavalry. Some of these soldiers were asleep under the trees, and their chargers were grazing quietly by. The delicious and refreshing rippling of a neighbouring brook, reminded our travellers of the forest description in " Gil Blas."

During the time of the Ronda fair, and a few days before and after, soldiers are stationed all along the roads, to protect passengers and their property from banditti which still infest these localities.

Our party continued on their journey without

molestation, or anything very remarkable, except the difficulty of the road, which at some places was nearly perpendicular, and excessively rough, until they reached a large plain, where they could see for miles before them. At the end of this beautiful tract rose abruptly a large and high mountain, on whose summit is situated Gaucin, their intended sleeping-place. A winding river, which, in their progression, they crossed more than ten times, rendered the view most delightful.

A "venta" or tavern, in the immediate neighbourhood, afforded shelter for two hours; and some oranges were procured from a child with coal-black eyes and dazzling white teeth, who also offered the ladies some flowers, which were gratefully received, and a small remuneration given. The duchess smiled as she heard the child exclaim, in reference to herself—" *Que hermosa e bella senora! Dios! che gracia!*" ("What a beautiful and graceful lady! Heavens! what grace!") Her own fair hair pre-

senting the charm of novelty, pleased the Spaniards more than Clara's dark tresses.

To give every one his due, Nicolo, the guide, was a first-rate cook. He now served up an excellent lunch, devoid of garlic and oil, which had been specially forbidden. The Duchess and Greville amused themselves by talking to the peasants, who are very civil, and possess fluency of speech, and pleasing manners. An Andalusian considers himself the finest person in the world, except his "Morena."* This self-complacence, though arising out of vanity, can hardly fail to give a man an independent bearing. Indeed, to see these peasants walk, one must admit they look like lords of the creation. No passer-by ever missed saluting the English party; the men saying, "*A los pies de usted*;"† or, "*Beso*

* Literally, "Brown woman;" but here it means "Lady-love."

† "At your feet, lady." "Usted" means "You." It is an abbreviation of "*vuestra merced*;" "your worship."

la mano de usted.”* And as they departed,
“*Quedate usted con Dios.*”†

These are all mere compliments, and are not to be otherwise received. If you admire anything belonging to a Spaniard, he immediately says, “*A la disposition de usted*”—(“At your disposition”); but it is almost unnecessary to observe that such an offer is uniformly refused. Still, it is a proof of good manners.

The hour was getting late, so the party had to remount. Mrs. Leicester and Lord Sidney rode together; so did the Duchess and Greville.

Though a cousin of the two ladies, Greville had not, till now, met them. Had it not been for the Duke’s kindness, he might never have formed their acquaintance. His line of life was in a different sphere to that of Lord Sidney; and

* “I kiss your hand.”

† “Remain with God.” “*Vaga usted con Dios*” is the regular and generally used benediction; but it is more correct to say “Remain,” than “Go,” to a person in a house.

he had no opportunity of going to London each season, like the other. He was a younger son, and had obtained a commission in a regiment now quartered at Gibraltar. For the last two years of his service, he had entirely altered his mode of life. Formerly wild and careless, a change had come over him soon after his arrival abroad. His former pursuits were abandoned; and though greatly liked by his associates, he was of too retiring a disposition to be considered a "sociable mess companion," which in the army is, or used to be, reckoned the "great acme of human perfection." He mixed but little with the society of the place; and, excepting at one house, seldom or never visited anywhere. His time was not, however, wasted. During his seclusion, he had studied Spanish; and now, to his satisfaction, found himself capable of conversing fluently in that language.

His brother officers, one and all, were unacquainted with the cause of the great change that

had taken place in him ; but there was one person—a lady residing in Gibraltar—in whom he confided, and who was fully aware that the melancholy which at most times had possession of him was, unfortunately, of too serious a character to be disregarded. But he did not think it necessary to extend his confidence. Greville was not only aware that such a person as Mrs. Leicester existed, and that she was his second cousin ; but he also knew that her sister had married a Duke, who was considered in his family to be of too haughty a disposition even to desire his, or their, acquaintance.

He was much surprised, therefore, to see the card of the Duke of Ellingfield upon his table ; for he was actually unaware of his presence in Gibraltar ; and before he had time to return the visit, he received a letter from his Grace, inviting him to join his cousins in the trip to Ronda, for which he (the Duke) would ask the necessary permission.

Greville was delighted at the idea of visiting the interior of Spain, and called on the Duke to express his sense of gratitude for the kindness he had done him. But his Grace was determined to make him aware that the favour was of slight importance, by saying, in the most flattering manner,—“ My dear sir, the pleasure of your society will, I am sure, fully repay the Duchess for any attention I may have endeavoured to pay you. My friend, Captain Fearon, the governor’s aide-de-camp, has spoken of you, and explained to me that you are a most desirable acquaintance. Besides this, you have claims on us as a kinsman of the Duchess.”

CHAPTER III.

THE ORANGE GROVE.

MRS. LEICESTER and Lord Sidney Tresham rode forward, followed, at some little distance, by the rest of the party. Clara was too expert an equestrian, to care for the impediments she now and then met with; and, as the road lay before them in a plain, they determined to push their horses on until they reached the foot of the mountain. Refreshed by rest, the hacks cantered gallantly.

The path, on each side, was flanked by ole-

anders and wild cypress ; and the adjacent river, winding round and round, rendered the scene picturesque and refreshing ; for no sooner had our party passed one branch of the stream, than another was at their feet.

All this was excitement to Mrs. Leicester ; and, though the heat was rather unpleasant, she felt herself happy as she rode along, listening to the interesting remarks of her companion.

Lord Sidney's manner—which to the Duchess was forced and light — assumed an entirely different character when addressing her sister, whom he treated, in presence of the Duke, with perfect respect, never making use even of the frivolous compliments he was in the daily habit of paying to her Grace.

But when alone with Clara, his reserve vanished. To a gay, thoughtless, and fashionable man, the beauties of so charming a person could not pass unheeded. He admired her extremely ; and, in his careless career, never dreamt of the

consequences which might arise from such unrestrained adoration of a young, beautiful, and married woman.

Clara, who, since her marriage, had never received a compliment—who was neglected by her husband—and, though of a gay disposition, had been in a manner excluded from her own set, could not but feel secretly charmed with the devoted attention, rendered more dangerous by respectful demeanour, which such an attractive person as Lord Sidney observed towards her. During the winter they had spent together, frequent opportunities had occurred for their being alone; and these had not been thrown away. All restraint on his part was removed when with her. But (strange anomaly!) although most agreeable to her, Mrs. Leicester could not shake off her embarrassment when she was with Lord Sidney.

On the present equestrian journey, she found herself in the position she liked, but feared; and

her heart beat every time she saw her companion about to speak. For a time, nothing except a few passing remarks had been made.

At length, they arrived at a sort of *bocage* near the river, and close to the mountain, called "The Orange Grove." Here the two companions alighted, and their steeds were allowed to wander about.

Mrs. Leicester expressed a wish for some oranges, which, as the boughs whereon they grew were rather high and difficult to reach, afforded her some time to collect her thoughts, and choose a seat.

As she saw Lord Sidney returning with the fruit, she appeared to him quite calm ; but her agitation was extreme. No one could have seen her at this moment without being struck by her superior beauty. Her sombrero was removed, and her hair, which was very dark, was in some disorder. Her eyes seemed blacker than usual, and sparkling with the exercise she had been

taking. This had increased the colour on her cheeks, and enhanced the clearness of that beautiful skin, which at all times was one of her chief attractions. Yet she looked pensive and melancholy.

How many conflicting thoughts rushed on the imagination of Tresham as he approached his lovely cousin ! When two people, who each inwardly acknowledge the power of the other, find themselves thus brought together where something must be expressed, the awkwardness of the situation is great. The thought of what to say increases the restraint. But it is removed when the first sentence has been uttered. This at once dissolves the embarrassing and oppressive spell.

In procuring the oranges, Lord Sidney had gathered some blossoms so rarely seen in England in a natural state, or even in an artificial semblance, except on one occasion ; and as he presented the branch to Mrs. Leicester, he thought

of the emblem, and was silent. But he was greatly affected when he saw Clara turning her head aside and weeping.

“My dear Mrs. Leicester,” he exclaimed, sitting down by her, “pray do not compel me to think that any imprudence on my part has caused you pain.”

“Lord Sidney,” replied Clara, “I really feel ashamed to evince such weakness, especially as I cannot plead any vindication. I hope you will excuse it.”

“Excuse it !” echoed he ; “could I ever have any cause to find a fault in you, it would surely not arise from a foolish act on my own part.”

“Orange blossom, except in Spain,” said Clara, “is rare to meet with. Now, as the recollections connected with it bear no happy remembrances to me, I must plead that as an excuse.”

“Enough, dear cousin !” ejaculated Lord Sidney. “You must not pain me with a *résumé*’

of your woes. Think not of the past, when the present can bring enjoyment."

"I admit myself wrong," returned Mrs. Leicester; "and being able, as you say, to enjoy the present by admiring the beauties of nature around me, I consider it weak to reflect too much upon the unhappy past."

"When," said Lord Sidney, "you allowed me at Malta to breathe the gentle name of 'Clara,' I promised never to use that prerogative again, unless commanded by you to do so; but now, cousin, I long to avail myself of it. May I whisper that name once more?"

"Sidney!" was the only word Mrs. Leicester uttered in reply.

"Dearest Clara!" ejaculated Lord Sidney, "that one word from your lips is sweeter to me than anything else you could have said, even though adorned with your own winning eloquence. Oh! why do you look so melancholy? Remember—pray do—the unchangeable, ever-

devoted love I bear towards you. Why should continual regrets for the past shade your bright countenance? Think of the enjoyment to be derived in the presence of one who understands your ideas before you express them, and who knows——”

“Lord Sidney Tresham,” interrupted Clara, “stop. When I formerly admitted to you that I could be happier in your society than in my husband’s, I extorted, as a sort of expiation for my wrong, a promise that you would never resume the subject unless at my suggestion. Such an indelicacy I imagined was not likely to be committed by me, and I considered the affair over. I now remind you of your promise.”

“Pardon me, Clara. I vow it was not my intention to break my promise. My present rashness is the result of an unforeseen circumstance. Still, I cannot see the harm of speaking of a dear subject, when silence only increases our pain.”

“Harm!” interrupted Mrs. Leicester, with a slight sarcastic smile; “*you* perceive no harm; but *I* say there *has* been harm. Yet you will not recognise my prudence in trying to avoid the peril I still see before me.”

“Most beloved woman!” burst forth from Tresham, in a passionate manner. “How can I keep any promise of restraint when alone with you? Why do you wish me to be silent, when my only thought is for your happiness?”

“Sidney!” exclaimed Mrs. Leicester, with a sigh, “if you love me, spare me! You do not, I should hope, require a repetition of the words, when I, a married woman and a mother, acknowledged that I loved another man better than their father. No! you cannot again require such an admission. I trust, therefore, you will converse in a less excited manner; for the more precious the subject is to me, the more pain, upon reflection, does it cause me.”

“Dearest,” returned Lord Sidney, “you reflect

too much. It is not manly in me to take advantage of your position. No. It is not perhaps honourable to remind you of the neglect of your husband—the separation from your children—the sacrifice of yourself. Every disadvantage that could be heaped upon a character of unblemished reputation and innate purity, has been heaped upon you. Still, I consider it is not generous on my part to remind you of these circumstances.”

“ Oh, for Mercy’s sake, change the subject !” ejaculated Mrs. Leicester. “ I see only one way of avoiding the danger before me — that is, by retirement ; and it must be decided and speedy.”

“ Clara,” responded Lord Sidney, “ sufficient ! I will never more offend you. Directly the Ronda bull fights (which I wish to see) are over, I will leave the Duke and return to England ; and I trust we shall not meet much there. For what I have said, forgive me.”

Mrs. Leicester was silent for some time ; and when she spoke, a change had come over her features. The melancholy that, until now, had pervaded her countenance, was no longer apparent. Her face brightened with animation, and her eyes sparkled with seeming delight. She herself now perceived how deeply she loved. As long as she was in Lord Sidney's presence, she only thought of protecting her reputation ; but directly she saw a chance of losing his society, her resolution staggered.

“ Tresham !” she exclaimed, “ I forgive you from the depth of my heart. Nay, I esteem you more and more for every word you speak. Your noble, generous conduct only endears you further to me. Now listen. Had I met you before I married, nothing would have induced me to make the sacrifice I did ; no, not even to save my father, which was my only reason for allying myself to Mr. Leicester. My husband dislikes me—I weary him ; and the few words

he spoke when I parted from him, only showed how glad he was to get rid of me."

Poor soul ! hated by her husband, and coveted by a *roué*, her's was indeed a pitiable situation. But the hate was safer than the selfish love. Ah ! it is terribly dangerous, this walking with half-closed eyes on the very edge of a deadly precipice.

In this manner Clara and Lord Sidney passed the time, until they were suddenly interrupted by the neigh of one of the horses, who, seeing his companions approach, recognised their vicinity by his greeting.

Clara and Tresham rose from where they had been sitting ; and Mrs. Leicester, who at first had placed the orange-blossom in her hat, suddenly changed its position to one near her heart.

The Duchess now rode up with Greville ; and, strange to remark, had a bouquet in her sombrero. It is the custom of the Andalusian peasants to wear real blossoms in their hats. Her

Grace, perceiving this, had requested Mr. Greville to get her some flowers. He alighted, plucked the first he saw, and presented them to her, without knowing, or seeming to observe, what he had gathered, until he was aroused from his reverie by the Duchess's clear voice laughing, and saying—

“Cousin Henry, I am not a fatalist; but look! you have given me among the flowers a bud of cypress.”

“Which reminds me,” interposed the Duke, “of that Marchioness of Winchester, about whom Milton has written some fine verses. I recollect a few of the lines:

‘He, at their invoking, came,
But with a scarce well-lighted flame;
And in his garland as he stood,
You might discern a cypress bud.’

But I am not afraid, my dear,” added his Grace to the Duchess, with a smile, “of your having the misfortune which befel Lady Winchester.”

This little incident occurred only a few minutes previous to the party reaching the Orange Grove. And what makes so slight an anecdote remarkable is, that Clara perceived the cypress at the time she was placing the orange-blossom in her own hat.

Yet how different at that moment were the prospects of those two sisters !

But they knew it not.

CHAPTER IV.

ROAD TO RONDA.

THE "Orange Grove" was chosen by general consent as a halting-place for an hour, to rest the horses before ascending the steep and rugged mountain. The refreshment of the shade, and the sweetness of the oranges, were sufficient inducements to cause this extra delay. However, it being now nearly four o'clock, and the guide informing them that the mountain would take at least three hours to ascend, they were forced soon to leave this quiet retreat, and face the abrupt and dangerous path.

The road seemed to get worse and worse at each step ; and had not the view been so magnificent and improved at every additional ascent, the ladies would have found the toil most irksome.

The prospect, indeed, was splendid. On one hand was a ravine, the sides of which were thickly planted ; and through the hollow meandered a small stream. The verdure of the turf was reviving after traversing the parched-up country around Gibraltar, the rock of which was becoming more visible the higher they ascended. This, together with the sea, and the yet more distant African mountains, with a foreground consisting of mountains planted with chesnut-trees, formed a panorama seldom exceeded in beauty or grandeur.

At length, having arrived at the summit of the range, they were saluted by a tribe of children, some very pretty, and all remarkable for the brilliancy of their eyes and the whiteness of

their teeth, who escorted them into a small town on their route, asking for "pennies." Even at this distance from England, these children were aware that John Bull might be easily cheated.

Mr. Nicolo had informed the Duke previously that he knew of a house where the party might be accommodated, and accordingly led the way to one; but the people did not appear at all anxious to receive the travellers, so they had to go to a miserable *posada*, the only sleeping-rooms of which were in a wretched loft over the stables, where, in all probability, they would have been kept awake all night by the noise underneath.

Though not fastidious, the Duchess decidedly objected to this domicile, and sent Mr. Greville with the guide to endeavour to find a home somewhere else for the night.

In a short time, her Grace's willing envoy returned with the welcome intelligence that he had succeeded in obtaining a most comfortable

house, which had been reserved for the colonel of the "Petticoats," as they called the 79th regiment. This warrior not having made his appearance, or even been heard of, the proprietor, who was also a colonel, and had served in the civil wars, was glad to find a substitute. He and his family were most attentive, and moderate in their demands.

The guide was not pleased, for being evidently unacquainted with this family, he could not make anything by the party under his charge. Indeed, from circumstances which afterwards transpired, the Duke was not happy in his selection of his guide, for he turned out to be a noted "contrabandista," and was so well known, that the Carabinero who stopped his Grace and friends, had been placed to arrest this individual, but the politeness of the Spanish general prevented him from informing them of this circumstance. Still, the soldiers might have restricted their attacks to him, without including the Duke and

his party, unless, indeed, Lord Sidney's demand for a pistol had laid them open to so vigorous a search.

After a good night's rest, and an early breakfast, the party again set out, leaving the town, which contained little worth seeing, before eight o'clock. Even at this hour the glorious sun shone with too much ardour; but the beauty of the scenery fully repaid the friends for the inconvenience of the heat.

The road, which for a few miles was good, passed through high hedges of wild roses and gumsistus, which not only afforded shade, but sent forth a delicious perfume.

Oh, lovely Andalusia, how favoured is thy province! Land of past glories and departed heroes, thou art still the soil where love reigns, and is understood. How superior to thy fair sisterland, Italy, in everything that pertains to passion!

The glories of the nation may have faded;

but the beauty of the women, and the superiority of the men in every manly and graceful accomplishment, still exist to prove what a people they must have been. And of all this rich and smiling country, Andalusia is the most favoured by Providence. There the ground produces the richest grapes, which make the wine so well known to us as Xeres, or Sherry.

Mrs. Leicester was the first to call the attention of her companions to the sublimity of the scene around them; and the party rested, to observe it more attentively.

They stood on a centre ridge of mountains, the corresponding ones on each side forming two profound and immense valleys covered with small hillocks planted with rich chesnut trees up to about three hundred feet of the spot from which they gazed, where grew luxuriant vines. The depth of the valley on one side appeared to be upwards of three thousand feet, gradually sloping. At some places, a white village, with

its church, hung over a precipice, shining in the splendour of the magnificent sun. The background was the same as the tourists had viewed on the preceding day—namely, Gibraltar, and the distant African mountains; but, on looking to the other side, their eyes fell on the town of Cortez. Its red tiles and white buildings, peeping through the dark green chesnut trees, were extremely picturesque.

Besides these immoveable features of the landscape, the scene was animated by groups of half-brigand-looking peasants, with their long string of mules, ascending the tracks on every side, and all bending their way, in the same direction, to Ronda fair. Most of the men carried arms, rendering the view worthy to be “dashed” on canvas by “savage Rosa,” as the poet calls Salvator.*

The present observers had beheld many coun-

* “Or savage Rosa dash’d, or learned Poussin drew.”

THOMSON, *Castle of Indolence*.

tries ; but the only scenery which deserves to be compared for sublimity with the present, is that of the Alps. Water was the only element wanting ; and, in a manner, even this was supplied ; for the dark blue waves of the Mediterranean rolled past in the distance, looking, from the position of the mountains, like huge lakes, here and there.

After indulging for some time in admiration of this spectacle, the friends advanced, while every step presented some new object to attract attention. At last, the road became so precipitous and dangerous, that they could only find time to guard against stumbles. But their hacks, thoroughly accustomed to the ground, were nearly as safe as mules, and no accident occurred. The manner in which these brutes gathered their four feet together and then let themselves slide down any difficult place, was more diverting to look at in others, than to feel underneath oneself.

Here two Spanish officers from San Roque joined them ; and, as they spoke French and understood English, they greatly added to the liveliness of the party.

The remains of an old Moorish town, with its square castle, flanked by towers, now appeared. It was beautifully situated upon a hill planted with chesnut trees, and lay directly under their path as they ambled forward. Here the road was excessively bad ; and, to mend matters, an old woman, in passing, informed our party that a man had been killed on this spot lately, his horse having slipped. The crone, then advising them to be very cautious in descending, left the friends not much improved in spirits by their interview with her.

“ Atajate,”—pronounced Ataharte—a small village—was the intended halt of this day ; but the place did not appear very inviting ; so the tourists passed on. The streets were filled with mules and horses of other parties, and the road

was thronged with people, all flocking to the fair; among whom were several women, who undertake long, and sometimes most arduous, journeys, in order to be present at their much-beloved bull-fights.

Between Atajate and Ronda, the road is very uninteresting, consisting of a succession of rocky and barren mountains. For two leagues (eight English miles) it possesses no variety. A way-farer has to ascend one hill, and then descend another, till he gets out of patience with the perpetually-recurring toil, and the never-varying sameness of aspect.

On their arrival at the top of the last mountain, the town of Ronda, situated in a large plain, became faintly visible. The change of scenery was rather a relief after the perpetual mountains.

The other parties were now so numerous, that one set could hardly be distinguished from another; while from every by-path issued strings and strings of mules. The rest of the way con-

sisted of a sort of sandy and rocky plain, where the Duke and his party managed to get on a little faster. This was a delightful change from the slow pace, "*malgré eux*," to which they were lately confined, and which was more fatiguing than going fast.

At last, Ronda was clearly and distinctly seen.

CHAPTER V.

LETTERS FROM ABROAD.

FROM the bright and sunny climate of Spain, we must now transport ourselves to the foggy and noisy streets of London.

I have been betrayed into that libellous word which foreigners and detractors so often cast in our teeth. I should have said "smoky," instead of "foggy," for London is not so often foggy; and even when a fog prevails, the vapour is not half so bad as the cold and rheumatic fogs of Paris.

In a small but exquisitely furnished apart-

ment in one of the Squares of the West End, half hidden by the rose-coloured muslin curtains which hung across the window, and which, paradoxical as it may seem, instead of obscuring, actually appeared to light up the air in that chamber, sat the Lady Grace Dalzell at a small table.

She seemed to be either reading what she herself had written, or one of the numerous letters which lay scattered about her *escritoire*.

Suddenly she spoke, but to herself, tearing up, at the same time, a sheet of manuscript.

"No!" exclaimed Lady Grace, "it will not do. Clara will perceive the forced style of my writing. I cannot now write. Why am I not able to say to Clara *now* what I once found no difficulty in saying? But her letters are changed in spirit and manner. The last, which I have just received, is so short, concise, and abrupt, that I feel reluctant to answer it in my usual style. I suppose the fatigue of travelling has

put all other ideas out of her head ; I will nevertheless wait for the next packet before I answer her last."

This was as follows :—

"Gibraltar.

"MY DEAREST GRACE,

"I am in such a hurry, that I fear my letter will be stupid. Mary and the Duke are preparing for a journey to Ronda to see the bull-fights. I do not like the idea. Lord Sidney is still with us. We dined with the Governor yesterday. They do not dance here, except at Mrs. G——'s. I love dancing. I suppose the balls have begun in town.

"Mary sends her love. Give mine to my aunt.

"Adieu.

"Your affectionate cousin,

"CLARA LEICESTER."

When Grace finished the perusal of this letter, tears mounted to her eyes.

“ So fond of dancing !” ejaculated she ;
“ Clara so fond of dancing ! Why, I never saw her dance. She never used to do so. Strange indeed ! and Sidney Tresham is still with them ! And never sends me a message—not even his love ! It is a mystery to me. Clara’s last letter was much about balls, and more about Sidney. Still it was long, and she entreated me to write.”

Grace looked now for some letters which she selected from among the number before her. They were from Mrs. Leicester, as, indeed, were all those which lay on the table.

The following were among them :—

“ Malta.

“ MY OWN DEAR COUSIN,

“ How delightful it is to write to those we love ! What pleasure it gives me to sit down and begin a letter to you !

“ Since my last, we have formed many acquaintances, among whom is a Lord Sidney Tresham, brother of the Marquis of Selton. Perhaps you have met him in London, for the Duke knows him well. Lord Sidney is in the Life Guards. I never fancied, when I first was introduced to him, that I could endure him, he appeared so supercilious and haughty. But that wears off upon acquaintance. Besides, he is shy,—at least, so Mary says, though I have not found it out yet. He is strikingly handsome, and sings well, which here is a great recommendation, as few men know much of music, though nearly every girl has some familiarity with it.

“ By-the-bye, this leads me to speak of another new acquaintance. A Mrs. Twyford and her daughter are passing the winter here. The mother is reported to be very rich ; but she is undoubtedly very vulgar, as you will soon perceive. No one knows who she is, yet she affects

a great deal. Miss Twyford is a plain, short girl, but extremely clever ; and were it not for the mother's manner, would be popular, being quiet and lady-like. She sings beautifully.

“ When I was introduced to these ladies at the house of Lady Burton, the mother's first words to me were, ‘ Oh ! you will hear my daughter sing directly.’ In Paris she was called ‘ *La Grisi des Salons.*’ I now saw a foreigner go to the piano. After much flourishing, he began the symphony of ‘ *Casta Diva,*’ on which Miss Twyford stood up, and after clearing her voice, began the song of Grisi, *par excellence*, in a true Prima Donna style. The girl has a fine voice, and has been well taught. But, in my humble opinion, she requires at least four or five years' more practice before the professional style at which she aims can be achieved. After the ‘ *adagio* ’ was over, I turned to Mrs. Twyford, and exclaimed, ‘ How very beautifully she sings !’ Her reply was, ‘ Yes, she sings lovely ; but you

should hear her in *Di piacer balza mio cor*. My *darter* sings anything — French, Italian, Spanish, German. Indeed, the only thing she bungles at is English.’

“I should tell you, dear Grace, that Mrs. Twyford’s *darter*, as she calls her, will not sing unless she has a professional person to play for her. She now began *Bell’ anima ritorne*, in certainly a masterly style, and afforded me much delight. During the performance, the *madre* beat time with her hand and head, every now and then looking furious if she saw any one speaking. But to tell the truth, there was little talking. After the song was over, Mrs. Twyford walked across the room, applauding as she progressed to the piano, and led her *darter* away to get some refreshment, after ‘that ’ere orrid hexertion.’

“This system of maternal flattery is deplorable, for the young lady is clever, and appears annoyed at her mother’s foolish conduct. I

hear that when she will not go to a party, she says she thinks she is quite as good as Mrs. or Lady So-and-so, and don't see why her *gal* should sing at her parties.

“ But enough of these people.

“ I shall never forgive you if you do not, by return of post, write a long, long letter, telling me all and everything about yourself ; and when you go to town.

“ The mail closes at three, so I must now wish you good-bye. Love to my aunt, to whom Mary writes by this packet.

“ Believe me,

“ Your ever attached friend and cousin,

“ CLARA LEICESTER.”

“ Malta.

“ DEAREST GRACE,

“ I feel happy to find myself alone, because I shall have leisure to write to you. The Duke and Mary are gone to St. Paul's Bay

but I was too tired this morning to accompany them.

“ We were at a ball last evening at Lady Burton’s, which was preceded by some singing. *Apropos*, I must mention a rather amusing occurrence. Mrs. Twyford, the vulgar lady of whom I spoke in my last, has really made me laugh more than I can express. Her daughter, who was asked to sing, and who was sitting next to Mary, refused, saying there was no one to accompany her. Lady Burton continued to press her, but with no success; and at last entreated her to sing that little Neapolitan thing, naming *La Marinella*, which the young lady also refused to do, stating she was in bad voice. Guess, then, my astonishment when I saw Mary rise and say, ‘ My dear Lady Burton, I shall be very happy to sing *La Marinella*, if you will allow me, as I know it.’ She went to the piano, and sang and accompanied the air very well indeed. I think Mary has a charming voice.

“During the performance Mrs. Twyford looked as black as night ; and directly it was over, and as Lady Burton was uttering a series of encomiums on Mary, she turned round to me, being, I suppose, unaware who I was, and said with a miserable attempt at a smile, ‘ La, vell ! I suppose that ’ere Duchess thinks she’s a been and done it.’ These were her actual words. I could contain myself no longer, and laughed outright.

“I was greatly relieved at being asked by Lady Burton to sing ; and I actually performed Miss Twyford’s show aria. The applause was great ; and after this, we danced.

“Lord Sidney is excessively fond of dancing ; he improves much upon acquaintance. The weather, even now, is getting hot ; but on the sea, it is always cool. We yacht a great deal in ‘The Flirt,’ (Sir Charles Trevor’s), which is now here.

“Mary would send her love, if here ; but I

am hastening to finish this, to add to the Duke's pile now upon the table.

“ Write soon to your dearest cousin,

“ CLARA.”

Mrs. Leicester's letters now grew shorter each time she wrote ; and, in proportion as she knew more of Lord Sidney Tresham, she said less about him. This, to a person of sensitive heart, was too apparent not to be easily remarked. The last letter Grace received was written in so hurried a style, that it entirely disconcerted her ; and in endeavouring to reply to it, she found so much embarrassment, that tears rose to her eyes. The comparison with Clara's first letter made her more sad.

Having dried her eyes and collected her papers, she was about to close her desk, when a rap was heard at her door, and her maid entered, demanding permission for a visit from the Countess, her mother.

Grace, of course, instantly said she was ready to see her mother ; and before she had time to rise from her seat, Lady Clementsford appeared.

In her capacity of heiress, Lady Grace occupied a suite of apartments of her own ; for her mother preferred receiving her lady visitors in her *boudoir de coucher*, after the Parisian fashion ; and Grace disliked the large rooms on a morning.

After the usual salutations, Lady Clementsford said, casting herself down on a satin *fauteuil*,

“ My child, you are always writing. Whom to, I cannot conceive. But what I mean to say is, I fear you exert yourself too much ; for I never come to see you that you are not at your writing-table.”

“ Dear mother,” responded Grace, “ you are too careful of my health. My sole correspondent is my cousin Clara. We agreed to keep journals when absent ; so I put down the most trivial events.”

“That is all very well, and as it should be,” rejoined Lady Clementsford. “But you neglect other and more important duties. For instance, I could almost believe you have not ordered a new dress for the Drawing-room which takes place next Thursday ; and to day is Monday !”

“Indeed I am guilty of that omission,” declared Grace ; “for I think the dress I used for the last Drawing-room will do perfectly well. I have worn it only once.”

“What !” exclaimed Lady Clementsford, with a look of combined astonishment and contempt, “go to a drawing-room twice in the same dress, and that, if I remember rightly, white ! You must be joking.”

Lady Grace smiled at the energy with which her mother spoke ; for she paid but little attention to her *toilette* ; whereas her ladyship never had been seen twice in public in the same dress.

“Well, to please you, mother,” said Grace, “if the interval between this and the Drawing-

room were greater, I would get a new dress. But now it is perfectly impossible, there is so little time."

"Impossible!" echoed the Countess, "you must *make* it possible. So little time, indeed! You cannot go with me in a faded dress."

"I should prefer staying away," quietly observed the young lady.

"But *I* should not," retorted her ladyship.

"Dearest mamma, you can go without me," murmured Grace; "for there is no actual necessity for *my* going. I was at the first, and will go to the Birthday."

"I could go if I liked, certainly, by myself," replied Lady Clementsford, with a true French shrug of the shoulders; "but I do not wish ill-natured people to say we have quarrelled. So either choose to keep me away—which I confess would be a great sacrifice to me—or else order a new dress and accompany me."

"I will do the latter, dear mother; though

I fear, my determination will cause much pain to others," meekly responded Grace. "But pray tell me how I can effect your wishes, and give as little trouble as possible to the poor girls who, I fear, will be forced to sit up night after night to finish a new dress for me at so brief a notice."

"Brava, Grace!" retorted her ladyship. "That speech would sound well from Lord * * * 's mouth, in advocacy of the poor needlewomen. You have nothing to do but give the order in your own name, and leave the rest to me and Madame Camille, who is coming here shortly. In your own name, mind," added her ladyship, "for I cannot afford to pay for your dresses. And remember, that, although the heiress of Dalzell might be able to go to a Drawing-room twice in the same dress, the Countess of Clementsford is not of sufficient importance to commit such a breach of good taste."

Her ladyship drew her *peignoir* close around her, and, after smiling and kissing her daughter, slid out of the apartment.

As soon as the door closed, Lady Grace, clasping her hands, exclaimed aloud—

“So! the heiress of Clementsford cannot be seen twice in society in a dress that cost three hundred guineas. Yet she can be treated with the utmost neglect and contempt by the only man she ever can love; and he the poor scion of a poor noble! What is more, she permits it.”

As Grace said this, her feelings entirely overcame her. She burst into tears, and hastened into an adjoining room.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LOVERS.

THE present was the third season of the "Heiress." Yet Lady Clementsford had not received one solicitation for the hand of her daughter. At first, she cared little; for she knew well that, with such a fortune as hers would be, there could be no fear of a lack of suitors. But she certainly was surprised that not one candidate had appeared in the field.

The tastes of Lady Grace were so retiring, and so different from her own, that Lady Cle-

mentsford began to fear some disadvantageous circumstances might occur from such retirement. Besides, the still beautiful Countess panted for freedom and an establishment of her own ; for she never considered the house where her daughter resided anything but a nominal home. She knew, moreover, that as long as she was with a young, accomplished, lovely and immensely rich girl, such as her daughter was, her own charms, which would soon be on the wane, were, in a great measure, passed over unregarded.

She therefore determined this season to do all she could to secure a good *parti* for Grace, and insisted upon her going out everywhere, and dressing in the most extravagant style.

Grace, however, did not in any manner assist her mother in these schemes, and showed such a thorough disinclination to attach to herself any of the gay butterflies that continually

fluttered around her, that no one gentleman in town could boast of having received more consideration than any other from Lady Grace.

This coldness of demeanour exasperated Lady Clementsford, who attributed the apathy of her daughter to her not endeavouring to effect a conquest. She herself, woman of the world as she was, had nevertheless been deceived; and here it must be stated that Lady Grace had not only many real admirers, but had already refused several offers. Nay, she was actually engaged at the time we speak of.

Why a person of such high feeling concealed these circumstances from her parents, should now be shown.

During one of the trips of Lady Clementsford, the establishment of Dalzell park was left entirely at her daughter's disposal and guidance. Forced by her father to entertain the military near them, she had formed the acquaintance

of a distant cousin, Henry Greville, who was quartered in the vicinity. Her beauty, and absence of anything like pride, had fascinated this young man, who, in the heedlessness of his love, never remembering the immense difference of position between the heiress and himself, had, in an unguarded moment, betrayed his passion, and even proposed to her. But, from the instant he had done so, perceiving that no reciprocity existed in the bosom of his cousin, a sudden conviction of the imprudence he had committed flashed upon him. He therefore only requested her to conceal his folly from her parents.

Lady Grace, in the most delicate manner, informed him, that although she could not return the tender feeling which animated him, she still hoped they should remain friends as before.

But from that day she saw no more of Greville during his stay in the neighbourhood;

and, shortly, his regiment was ordered abroad, and she had not even heard of him.

About the same time, among the frequent visitors at the park, was Lord Sidney Tresham. The distance from London by railroad was so trifling, that two hours brought him down. He was, as is known, connected with Lady Clementsford, and therefore related to Lady Grace and the Duchess. Lord Sidney's visits now became of frequent occurrence ; and he was soon invited to spend some time at Dalzell park, a summons which was, of course, accepted.

Lord Sidney had lately lost immense sums at play ; and as his creditors were very importunate, the handsome Captain turned his attention to the lottery of marriage, and suddenly remembered his rich relative. His visits, therefore, had not been by chance. Systematic and deep-laid were his plans ; and he determined to profit by them, regardless of the consequences to another.

How different from that of poor Greville was his courtship ! At first, he ascertained thoroughly the tastes, pursuits, and wishes of Grace, and in every thing tried to please her. No courtier could have been more attentive to his regal mistress, than was Tresham now to Lady Grace.

What, at first, only pleased and flattered, soon began to take a firmer hold of the young and confiding girl. She never had met with any one so handsome, kind, or respectful, as Lord Sidney ; and, her pride becoming affected, she soon dropped into the snare prepared for her, and fell violently in love with him.

Many trifling circumstances showed Tresham the triumph he had achieved. But he patiently abided his time ; and the end of his visit had arrived before he spoke to her on the subject.

Grace could not help contrasting the behaviour and silent adoration evinced by her

present suitor, with the sudden and unexpected avowal of Greville; and the comparison was greatly to the latter's disadvantage. She, however, never betrayed his secret; and Lord Clementsford, not being of a very shrewd disposition, and attending almost exclusively to the affairs of the county, paid but little attention to the admirers of his daughter.

But far different was it with Mary Delaunay, who always resided with her cousin during Lady Clementsford's absences abroad. She, also, was playing a game, and much was at stake. She saw, observed, and remembered, but was silent; and had any one at this moment told her that the marriage of Lady Grace and Lord Sidney was about to take place, she would not have been surprised. Still, as no confidence was made to her, she asked no questions.

As the time of Lord Sidney's departure was drawing to a close, he took every opportunity to be alone with Grace. Her cousin's tact, and

father's unobserving manners, rendered this of easy fulfilment.

At last, the actual day arrived for his going. A few hours previous to his departure, he found himself in the drawing-room alone with Lady Grace. The conversation had been on indifferent subjects, though all drawing to his real object. At last, he broke the ice, by saying—

“Lady Grace, I am going abroad this winter.”

He paused ; and, watching the effect of his words, soon perceived that he should not speak in vain.

“But,” resumed he, “no matter what I see, or where I go. Never shall I forget the pleasant time I have lately passed.”

Grace, being totally unaccustomed to compliments, and therefore not knowing well how to reply to them, appeared rather confused—an omen from which Lord Sidney drew the most favourable auguries.

“Might I, then, presume to ask the Lady Grace,” added he, “if she will also admit that my stay here has not been too long?”

Grace’s colour faded more and more at every word Tresham uttered. The artless girl never dreamt of disguising what she felt; and, being aware of the necessity of saying something, replied, “That indeed his visit had afforded them all so much pleasure, that she considered she could answer for the rest, by expressing how painful would be his departure.”

This was not sufficient for Lord Sidney, who was determined, although pretty well aware what the issue of his present conversation would be, to gain her confession of love.

“Yes!” pursued he, “I am going abroad; and, in remembering the happiness I have lately had, only look forward with pain to my journey. But,” he added, after a pause, “could I now leave England with any reason to suppose that my presence had not been en-

tirely indifferent to my cousin Grace, I should be happy."

The colour came and went in the features of Lady Grace, and she tried to speak; but her confusion was so manifest, that Tresham, clearly understanding the state of her heart, approached, and, seating himself close by her, exclaimed—

"Grace! pardon me, I pray you, for this liberty; but I feel I can no longer contain the sentiments I entertain toward you within my own breast. Dear cousin, I love you! And no matter what may be the consequences of the avowal, I feel that without the possession of this hand," and he took her yielding palm in his own, "I can never be happy."

Her hand remained in his, but she spoke not.

"Speak, Grace! I entreat you, speak! I have loved you for some time; but I feared to be denied, and so have been silent. But now I must hear what my fate is to be."

“Lord Sidney!” ejaculated she, withdrawing her hand, “I feel myself quite at a loss what to reply. You have told me you love me, and have said you desire an alliance with me. I can inform you with great pleasure that I have never met any one I liked so much as yourself; but as my parents know nothing of what you now say, I must request you to converse with Lord Clementsford on the subject; for I, of course, cannot contract an engagement without his consent. However, I consider that I ought to say I will never, of my own accord, marry any one else. This, of course, is a response to your sentiments.”

“Dearest girl!” ejaculated Tresham, “thanks, a thousand thanks for your words! I cannot, however, at this moment explain why it is impossible for me to ask for your father’s consent. Let me add, that if you really love me, I will wait for a few years until you are of age, and if then you meet with no one you like better than

me, I will renew my proposition. I must, however, extort from you a promise of never informing *any one* of this conversation, for it is necessary I should remind you of the difference of our fortunes—of my difficulties—of many circumstances which might prevent Lord Clementsford from favouring my wishes.”

Grace here interrupted him, saying—

“Excuse me, Lord Sidney, such considerations would, I am certain, have no effect upon my father. I am an heiress ; every one knows it, and I shall marry the man I love. If, indeed, I can, by my fortune, benefit you and extricate you from difficulties, I shall consider myself more blest than in merely having the power to do so ; for if the will is granted me to make a good use of the wealth which God has been pleased to place in my possession, I feel I am, indeed, highly favoured.”

“Dearest, generous girl !” began Tresham, but he was again interrupted.

“Listen!” exclaimed Grace, emphatically ;
“I voluntarily accept your proposition. I will consider myself engaged to you ; and if, when I am of age—which will be in two years and a half—you are still of the same mind, I will then inform my parents of my intention of selecting you for a husband. My mother never will suspect that my indifference to the rest of the world is for your sake alone. She supposes I have only to choose ; and my dear father is of too affectionate a disposition to wish to force any alliance upon me. Wait, then, till I am twenty-one, when I shall inherit most of his property, and you will find me still prepared to fulfil my contract.”

After a few more speeches of this nature, Grace requested that Lord Sidney would postpone his departure for a few days. They now parted. Each was happy, and each solemnly promised to keep the other's secret.

It was a sweet dream ; and Lady Grace, in

the joy of the present moment, and even when she received the gentle pressure of her lover's warm hand, heaved a sigh of pity for one far away. She now understood and felt what misery she must have caused him.

Need it be said the absent one was Greville?

CHAPTER VII.

THE TRUANT.

TRESHAM remained in town a fortnight longer, during which all reserve on his part was banished. He confessed to Grace his pecuniary difficulties; described how they had arisen; informed her that he had lost all taste for play; and acquainted her with the reasons that forced him to go abroad. In thus confiding to her every particular connected with his present position, he only rendered himself ten times more dear to his future wife.

Lady Grace considered herself most blessed in being able to extricate him she loved from his embarrassment, and she felt the value of the money she had, until now, despised. She thought, often and often, of the pleasure it would give her to deny herself a costly dress, to pay one debt of her beloved Sidney.

Many generous and high-minded persons, who have been favoured by Providence with riches, are apt to fall into the same error with regard to wealth as Grace did. In despising it, she was wrong ; for though it must be confessed that during adversity it is more difficult to be upright than when one is surrounded by abundance, still, a rich person is open to many and violent temptations. The strongest of these is the not making a good use of the wealth confided to its possessor, and estimating it only as a means of self-indulgence, rather than as a trust bestowed by Providence partly for the good of others. Although Grace's ideas

on this subject were superior to those of nineteenthths of the gay and rich, she, in only *now* becoming aware of the benefits she had received from above, evinced selfishness and human weakness ; for the instant she perceived what use she could be to Tresham, she valued the prospect of her wealth.

Sidney reiterated his thanks and his profession of attachment, but always insisted upon her remaining silent as to their engagement ; and Grace, in consenting, justified her conduct to herself by thinking of Greville's secret, which, to do her justice, she had never breathed to a soul ; and, as she had nothing to gain by such a suppression, she balanced the one against the other ; for a voice whispered to her that she was doing wrong in concealing her engagement from her parents.

Time passed, and had brought about its manifold changes. Lord Sidney had gone abroad, and continued to write to his intended. Mary,

Delaunay had married, and left her aunt's protection ; and Lady Grace was still supposed to be looking out for a match.

As long as Sidney wrote to her, she was happy. She received from him full and glowing descriptions of the lands through which he was passing, and he always wrote in the same warm and affectionate style. Paris, Florence, Naples, Rome, Milan, and Venice, were visited by him ; and, as a consequence, the further he went away, his letters were fewer. He passed a whole winter in Vienna. At first he had written regularly ; yet, in the dissipation of that pleasure-hunting city, he soon relapsed into carelessness, and at last seldom sent a letter to his (loving) Grace. She perceived this, but made every allowance for him, until he entirely left off corresponding with her.

She ascertained, however, from the public papers, that he had left Vienna, and had gone down the Danube—that he had visited Con-

stantinople, Athens, and the Ionian Islands ; but from himself she never heard ; and was actually unaware of his present abode, until the letters of Mrs. Leicester acquainted her with his being at Malta.

In her answers, Grace never alluded to Tresham ; but what now caused her excessive melancholy and alarm was, that Clara, who appeared, by her letters, to get more and more intimate with Lord Sidney during the winter they had passed together, could not have told him that she was related to Grace ; if she had, he had never sent her a message of any kind.

Had Grace been thoroughly aware of the real cause of his neglect at this time, her heart would have broken ; but, luckily, in her blind love, she only fancied his silence arose from carelessness.

We last saw Lady Grace in her room giving way to an outburst of feeling, which showed

that both the indifference of Sidney and the change in Clara had been remarked by her. She, nevertheless, did all she could to resist this growing fear, and prepared to satisfy her mother's wishes by consenting to go to the Drawing-room, and by ordering a new dress.

The day came, and Grace appeared to be the most beautiful and well-dressed lady at the reception. She also seemed to be in good spirits; and many, on this occasion, fancied that her coldness and apathy were dying away, in hope of not passing another season unmarried.

Lady Clementsford also remarked the change, and was contented. Balls, dinner-parties, operas, and fêtes at Richmond and Fulham took place in turn, at all of which Grace was present, magnificently attired. But the season progressed; and though the *débüt* of Jenny Lind and the rival Operas turned most people's

brains, it was still a matter of surprise that Lady Grace appeared to effect no conquest.

And thus we must leave her, and the plotting Lady Clementsford, to return to the other party and the climate of sweet Andalusia.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE INCOGNITA.

RONDA is situated on a large plain, encircled by mountains—those mountains so celebrated for adventures and robbers. The town is built upon very extraordinary natural walls of the height of from four to five hundred feet, and as perpendicular as if they had been the work of art.

The entrance into the suburbs is not prepossessing; but as soon as you pass the gates, the town improves. The streets are narrow

and tortuous until you arrive at the new town, where the houses are fine. Having passed the dirty suburb, you arrive at the bridge, where a magnificent view downwards is obtained—rock pitched upon rock, from which, in some places, trees spring out, and here and there cascades gush forth.

After crossing the bridge, you come upon the Plaza, or Square, built much in the style of the Palais Royal in Paris; and further on, is the Calle de San Carlos (Street of Don Carlos), the principal one in the town, at the extremity of which is a fine convent. The Alameda is close to this; and at a little distance may be seen the Plaza de Toros (bull-ring). Altogether, the *coup-d'œil* is very picturesque and beautiful.

The English party followed Nicolo, the guide, who was now in advance. He again took the friends to a miserable house, which they declined inhabiting, especially as several persons,

attracted by the *Anglais* look of the cavalcade, and hoping to reap a golden harvest from rich "Milords," had offered their house. Accordingly, choosing one opposite the Plaza de Toros, the party proceeded there forthwith.

This house belonged to Don Ildefonso Ruiz, "*teniente de infanteria*."

Lord Sidney and Greville sallied out into the town, thinking they could not see it soon enough. It being the eve of the fair (May nineteenth), the streets were thronged with people, all clad in their Majo dresses, most of them having long painted sticks with a ball at one end, and at the top a fork of wood. This instrument is used as a means of applauding at the bull-fights, in order to avoid the exertion of clapping the hands.

Tresham and Greville went to the bull-ring, and by the help of a small fee, were admitted. The size of this building is enormous. It is a stone edifice, two stories high, and uncovered

after the manner of the ancient theatres. On the ground floor a stone barrier, or wall, of about five feet in height, is built in a circular form, like the rest of the structure. The diameter of the circle (which is perfect) in the actual arena, is at least one hundred and ninety feet. This will convey an idea of the magnitude of the fabric. The top story is divided into balconies (we should call them boxes) for the grandees, except when the afternoon sun shines, and then the partitions being removed, the common people are admitted to this and the story underneath.

The desirable object is to avoid the sun ; and the prices vary according to the greater or less degree of shade afforded by any particular balcony. There being only one "balcony" left, Lord Sidney Tresham hastened to secure it.

Our companions now left this theatre of brutality to visit the Alameda—the walk of beauty and love. This parade is divided into

formal walks, with trees on each border ; and at its termination is a terrace built upon natural walls like the rest of the town, whence is obtained the same grand view as from the bridge.

The Alameda was now crowded with Senors in their Majo dresses, and Senioritas in their fascinating mantillas and fans. Here is the rendezvous every evening when the sun is gone down ; at which time, in the declining light, the only defect a Spanish lady has is not observed.

Difficult, indeed, to please must those be who do not admire the walk and carriage of the Andalusian beauties. Their black eyes and raven masses of hair dazzle the beholder. But what they pride themselves most upon is their grace—called by their lovers “sal”—a most emphatic word ; meaning that, as all food is insipid without salt, so is a woman without grace. This, though studied by Spanish females from childhood, is, in some manner,

natural. Oh, if our London and Parisian belles, whose coquettish gait is affectation, could see these children of nature passing over the ground like queens, hardly deigning to touch the earth, they would surely try to imitate them. A man seeing them, is in danger of becoming ungallant to the rest of the fair sex throughout the world, though least so to those of our own dear England.

In this tirade about the "*jaleo*" of the Spaniards, the defect mentioned a short time back has been unproclaimed. The colour of the skin is, to my taste, the only fault in an Andalusian belle; and this, in the sunset glow, is not observable. But the observation is not applicable to the "*Rondeñas*," who are remarkable for their good complexions, the hills surrounding Ronda rendering the climate far cooler than Gibraltar.

Greville and Tresham elbowed their way through these charmers, perfectly astounded;

but as each had, in his own mind, a secret lovelier one, they were not so much captivated as an impartial observer would have been. Presently, however, Lord Sidney felt an unusual pressure of his friend's arm, when, looking in his face, and perceiving the extraordinary paleness which had come over it, he asked if he was unwell.

"Oh, no," replied Greville; "the fatigue of the ride may have made me a little paler than usual, but I am quite well."

His words, however, contradicted those when, a short time previously, he had informed Lord Sidney that he never got tired of equestrian exercise.

"Look!" exclaimed Sidney, "look at those two beautiful girls just passing."

Greville looked, but muttered that, among so many beauties, one or two superior could hardly be distinguished.

Nevertheless, one of the promenaders, who

with her companion passed our friends, possessed extra claims which could not escape notice. Her *tournure* was the most striking attraction at first ; but on a further survey, the harmony of her features, which were pure Grecian, monopolized the gazer's regard. Her long, dark eyes were fringed with lashes of the same hue, which, when she closed them, extended to some length down her face. She was pale, and looked delicate ; and her feet and hands were so diminutive, that, unless seen, their proportions could scarcely be credited. Added to all these advantages, long chesnut ringlets made her more beautiful, from the rarity of such tresses in Andalusia. She was dressed in a black silk dress, faultlessly made, and a mantilla, which cast a slight shade over her expressive features.

Her companion was darker, and had black hair, but she was beautiful and young.

"Well, Greville," said Lord Sidney, "what do you think of that creature with the light

curls? Enough, I should imagine, to tempt you to overcome your reserve."

"I scarcely saw her," faltered Greville, with increasing agitation and a forced smile. "But, to tell you the truth, the pangs of hunger are beginning to assail me so sharply, that I have little time to think of aught beside. So let us return to the ladies."

Tresham consented, provided his companion would take two or three more turns on the Alameda. Each time they passed, Greville looked in a contrary direction when the above-mentioned female promenaders met them; and, at last, our two English friends passed the gate on their way back.

"That pretty girl really reminds me of some one I have seen before," observed Lord Sidney in a tone of levity. "Was she not lovely?"

"Beautiful indeed!" replied Greville.

"Why, I understood you to say you hardly noticed her," rejoined Lord Sidney.

“But we passed her a second time since I said that,” Greville smilingly remarked.

Thus talking, our companions arrived at the house in which the ladies were waiting dinner for them. This was now served, and an excellent one it was, to the credit of Nicolo, who had studiously avoided garlic and onions.

The party retired early to rest, being extremely fatigued. They had, however, scarcely entered their apartments, when a tremendous noise in the streets made them all rush to the windows ; and, as the balconies ran into one, our travellers were again together.

The scene below them was novel and exciting. Thousands and thousands of people were crowding round the gates of the Plaza de Toros to witness the entry of the bulls. First a clamorous shout was heard ; then came a rushing noise made by about twenty animals galloping into an open gate, which being instantly closed, the crowd dispersed as if by magic.

The *Encierro de Toros* (inclosing of the bulls) is considered to be a most amusing ceremony; but it occurs early in the morning, and consists in placing the bulls in separate cells, all of which communicate with each other by sliding doors; so that, as soon as one bull enters the ring on the days of fighting, another succeeds to his cell, which, in its turn, receives a fresh occupant; and so on until no more are to come.

The manner the wild bulls are enticed from their haunts is thus: — the localities being known, a number of tame cattle are brought to the spot, having bells round their necks. Their wild companions, attracted by the sound, come down to join them; and, as soon as they are mixed indiscriminately, mounted men, with long spears to protect themselves, chase them all *pêle-mêle*. The tame cattle, knowing the way back, rush to the town, and the wild ones follow. They are thus got within a short distance of the place,

where they are kept until midnight, when they are taken to the arena.

It was this transaction which congregated the number of people underneath the windows of our friends, who now retired for the night.

Being now alone, Greville abandoned himself to reflections which only tended to make him more melancholy. His agitation, on the Alameda, which had been so apparent to Lord Sidney, did not originate, as he evasively said, from accident, but was produced by a cause, which, alas for Greville ! was the foundation of all his misery. The beauty on the walk had been perceived first by him, although he did not call Sidney's attention to her. The instant he saw her, he started ; for her look awakened dreams long relinquished, scenes far distant, and crushed and blighted hopes. The stranger-lady, in fact, was most like his image of beauty and intellectual perfection—his worldly idol—the lost, but still prized, Lady Grace Dalzell. In

the solitude of his chamber, Greville indulged in tender, though sad, ruminations, and remembered Tresham's remark as to the resemblance of the incognita to some one he knew.

"Yes, indeed," thought he, "she was very like. Had I not known where Lady Grace is, I should have been mistaken. I never saw a more perfect resemblance. But what is she, or her image, to me? I never can love again; and even if I did, should perhaps meet with no return!"

And his mind and heart wandered back to his distant land, and her whom it contained.

Greville, however, fancied himself more in love than he really was, or ever had been. He had, indeed, admired Lord Clementsford's daughter, and respected her; and, with a disposition like his, had he been united to such an amiable character as Grace, he might have realized that dream of joy which monopolized his brain. But he certainly had been most rash

in his proposal to Lady Grace, and now suffered for his folly.

Sleep did not visit Greville for hours ; and when it closed his eyelids, the night was so far advanced that, on his awaking, the sun had risen many hours. Going to the room wherein the friends were to assemble, Greville found the party had breakfasted and gone out. He therefore ordered Nicolo to serve up his morning meal in an apartment below, after asking permission of the family who occupied it. This being willingly conceded, he finished his repast, conversing with the Senoritas of the house, and then went to the window to see the passers-by.

Suddenly, as he was laughing with " La Sobrina," (a niece of his host), he saw two ladies and a servant pass the house. One of them, turning her head at the moment, disclosed to Greville the Alameda beauty—the unknown charmer of the previous day. His

agitation was now as violent as before, and he could only falter out, "Quien esta?"

"Oh," replied the senora, "E la Marquesa." Then, after a pause, she added, with a satirical expression of the face, "Being very rich, the Marquesa di Salvatierra is the belle of Ronda." She laughed derisively as she went on; but seeing Greville's remarkable looks, she ejaculated, "Pero que tiene usted, senor?"*

Greville smiled, but it was a smile of sadness; and "La Sobrina," taking up a guitar, sang a fandango. When this was finished, Greville found a good opportunity of retiring; and, rushing up to his room, he shut the door, and again delivered himself up to bitter reflections.

"And so," thought he, "I am fated never to love any but the rich and those above me! This fair stranger, whom I might have expected to love for her own sake, would also think I wanted

* But what is the matter, sir?

her money. I should have been born the eldest son ; and then I might have been loved ; but as I am not so, my dream of life is past."

He now put on his hat, and went out to look for the rest of the party, who had sauntered forth some time past.

CHAPTER IX.

A HAZARDOUS DESCENT. THE ORANGE-BRANCH.

THE MANTILLA.

THE Duke and Duchess, accompanied by Don Ildefonso Ruiz (a pedant), passed through the now gay streets of Ronda.

The fair had regularly begun, and booths, containing Mantas,* Spanish bridles, sweet-meats, castanets, and everything which could tempt the unwary, lined each side of the streets. Our friends stopped at the bridge to examine the view again. The chasm here disclosed is awfully

* Mantas, gay-coloured woollen rugs worn over the shoulder somewhat like the Scotch plaid.

grand. At the bottom are some mills, from which the water gushes with turbulence. The chesnut-trees in the valley, together with the distant mountains, are magnificent features in the wide prospect.

"I wish I had my sketch-book," said her Grace. "But I lent it to Henry Greville." Then, for the first time, remarking his absence, she added—"By the bye, where is he? We must send some one back to tell him where we are going."

"Really, Duchess," lisped Lord Sidney, "such a sluggard as Greville does not deserve to see this stupendous view."

"But we must take compassion on him, nevertheless," rejoined her Grace.

The cicerone (Don Ildefonso) who accompanied our tourists, was careful in explaining whatever was worth notice, and quoted Latin and Greek at nearly every sentence. He possessed, indeed, much and varied information,

and detected Tresham's name at once as having been borne by a hero of the Peninsula. Dates seemed at his fingers' end. But his information was given with such rapidity of utterance, that the party did not gain, in his rush of words, many facts concerning the town, which, doubtless, they would have obtained from a less voluble personage.

They now arrived at a house called The Convent. It was an ancient Moorish edifice. Indeed, this part of the town is all Moorish. Some keys were brought by a lad, who, upon opening a door, ushered the tourists into a sort of terrace, from which might be descried an extraordinary prospect. Directly in front, was a rock about three hundred feet high, having its summit crowned with buildings. On either side were other rocks, each built upon, one having the ruins of an old Moorish castle raised on arches.

Here was a new opportunity for Don Ildefonso

to indulge in a tirade about the extraordinary inventions of the Moors, who used to raise the water in some miraculous manner ; and, as the height was extreme, and the contrivance primitive, the Duchess, who was the constant victim, expressed her wonder. Well she might do so ; for, to tell the truth, she did not understand a word he was saying, as he mixed up names and dates so confusedly, that it was perfectly impossible, at the termination of one of his stories, to remember the commencement, or even to collect the matter of it.

They now descended some Moorish steps to see a fountain gushing out of the solid rock. These ancient steps are excavated in the stony mountain ; and, as no light penetrated the subterranean passage, they were preceded by a lad with a lantern. Much dilapidated was the descent ; and the steps being exceedingly rugged, they were difficult to find in the dark. But our party went on, trusting to the assistance

of the Toro sticks which they had purchased, and which preserved them from many falls, though they frequently slipped. It was necessary, on these occasions, for those who were in front to caution the others; for if one had fallen, the rest must have shared a similar fate. The damp was extreme; the heat excessive; and the undertaking was anything but a pleasant or safe one. They soon arrived at a sort of vaulted place, containing several divisions. Here it was supposed the Moors used to confine their prisoners.

Mrs. Leicester now proclaimed her inability to proceed farther; and as the Duchess insisted on descending, Lord Sidney had to escort Clara back.

At last, their Graces reached the bottom of the chasm, where they were not even repaid by the object they had come to see. Their disgust was great at finding they had visited the wrong place. Nothing whatever was to be seen here,

except the same buildings they had already beheld from the terrace. They were compelled, moreover, to stand upon ledges of rock to avoid getting wet through. Nevertheless, it was necessary to wait here some time to recruit their strength.

Their position, however, was curious; for they appeared to be in a spacious cavern without a roof; and before they could see anything but rock, or get a glimpse of sun-light, they had to look up three hundred or four hundred feet. The houses from here seemed more picturesque, being built so close to the edge of the precipice.

In the mean time, Mrs. Leicester and Tresham had retraced their steps, and reached the terrace. Here was a seat under a canopy of orange trees.

Clara was the first to break the silence, until now preserved.

"Dearest Sidney," said she, "I have not been able to speak with you since we were interrupted

in the Orange Grove. Our present seat reminds me of the piece of blossom you then gave me. Alas ! it is now faded. Will you therefore pluck me a fresh piece ? and I will throw the old one away."

She here produced from her pocket the twig of orange blossom she had previously received.

Lord Sidney rose to get a fresh shoot from a branch, with which he soon returned, and gave it to her. This, she placed in her dress, and, throwing the other away over the precipice, exclaimed, with a smile—

"Thus perish, emblem of love, now faded ! May ours never, like that, be blighted !"

"My own Clara, never !" responded Lord Sidney. "Mine will always be fresh as this which I here give you. Now listen, sweet one. As long as we remain in Spain, or are together, I will, each morning, send you a branch of that flower, gathered by my own hand, to remind you of the renewal each day of my love."

“Thanks, dearest Tresham, thanks!” faintly ejaculated Mrs. Leicester, with a sigh.

“Clara,” interrogated Lord Sidney, “are you happy?”

“Perfectly so,” replied she; “for I am with you.”

“Beloved one,” persisted Tresham, “do you regret anything?”

“Nothing, nothing, when I have you here,” answered Clara.

“Do you think I have behaved badly to you?” pursued he.

“Dearest, no,” replied Clara. “As long as I can stay with you, I feel I am indeed blessed.”

“I thank you, generous woman, from my heart!” exclaimed Tresham.

“What, dearest, do you suppose I have been thinking of?” asked Clara. “Look there!” And she pointed to a valley in the distant mountains.

“I cannot imagine,” Sidney answered.

“Well,” continued she, “I have been fancying I should like to live and die there. How serene and happy everything looks ! The silence of the scene is broken only by the bell of that distant church, calling the poor, innocent peasants to their worship. In such a spot, I should be only too happy.”

“Not *too* happy,” returned Tresham, “when you make me more so. But such a retirement is not fitted for you. No ; you are meant to shine in the world. Beautiful and young, you have still a life of conquest before you.”

“Stop, Sidney, for heaven’s sake !” exclaimed Mrs. Leicester. — “A life of conquest ! If I supposed I could ever try to engage the affections of any other than yourself, I would at the present moment—wicked as the act might be—throw myself from this wall. Look over, dear Sidney, and behold the depth. The result—instant death—would be sweet compared to the thought of deceiving you.”

“Oh, I did not mean that,” replied he, as he rose and looked over the wall, shuddering at Clara’s words.

The approaching steps of the party returning, put a stop to any further conversation; and, in a few moments, the Duchess stood on the terrace.

“Indeed, Clara,” said her Grace, “you have had a wonderful escape. The descent, after you left us, was terrific; the ascent, worse; and my legs are aching with pain. You were, indeed, wise not to come; and (to crown all) the promised guerdon of our pain—the rushing fountain—was not there!”

The *teniente* was so ungallant as to laugh heartily at them both for the discomfiture they exhibited; but, as he was aged, her Grace pardoned him.

“The old fool,” resumed she, “took us, after all, to the wrong place. But though I have performed one of the labours of Hercules, I

should have thought nothing of it had I been able to see the steps ; but the *muchaco* chose to let the lamp go out, and the consequence was that I fell about twenty times."

The Duke here interposed a few reproaches upon the *teniente*, who, totally misunderstanding what he said, laughed more.

"Y pues la duchessa tomara 'la siesta y estara fresca por los Toros,"* he said with a smile.

"Si, si, con mucho gusto,"† replied her Grace. "So, Duke, never mind !"

Greville was now seen approaching the party.

"Oh, Mr. Greville," said the Duchess, "you have had a fortunate escape. During the last hour, I have felt myself buried alive ; and, indeed, it is only now that I feel myself free again. Thank heaven ! we are out of that horrid place."

* And after it the Duchess will take a siesta and be ready for the bull-fights.

† Yes, yes, with much pleasure.

And she gave to Greville a description of her toil and disappointment.

After giving the careless link-boy a few “*pe-setas*,”* they returned homewards, and passed a house remarkable for the beauty of its façade, which was highly sculptured with arabesques and coats of arms. Her Grace here stopped, and, speaking to Greville, said,—

“Mind, Henry, you return me my sketch-book ; and, if you are not too lazy, come with me to-morrow morning, and I will sketch this house.”

They now entered several churches *en passant*. Don Ildefonso, who still officiated as cicerone, was as loquacious as ever, wearying the friends with his explanations and still more oppressive jests. At length they arrived at the house. The ladies retired to take a siesta, and the gentlemen sallied farther into the town to pur-

* Ninepence generally, but here much less.

chase jackets and ornaments for the bull-fights, as they were going "a la majo."

Clara's heart being too light to sleep, she ordered the shutters to be opened, and sat down to write to her cousin, Grace Dalzell, being conscious that she had too long neglected her. Clara had been writing for some time, when she was interrupted by a tap at the door, and Lord Sidney entered, followed by a man with a carton in his hand.

"Mrs. Leicester," said he, "I have come to ask a favour of you. Will you promise me to perform it?"

Clara looked in his face, and answered—

"Granted before asked."

"Well, then," rejoined Lord Sidney, "it is that you will choose a mantilla, and go to the bull-fights in one."

"Really," replied Clara, "I am ashamed to do so. Besides, I cannot put one on. However, I will try; and I dare say, with the

assistance of the ladies of the house, I may succeed. But you must get Mary to wear one also."

"I cannot afford a double present," observed Lord Sidney, looking at Clara with a significant expression. "Still, if the Duchess will buy one, I will ask her, though a mantilla will not become her as it will you. But where is she?"

"Oh, taking a siesta after her fatigue this morning, which you and I happily avoided," replied Mrs. Leicester with a smile. "So do not awake her."

"Why?" rejoined Sidney; "it is now nearly three o'clock, and we have to lunch first. Besides, I am not ignorant what time ladies take to dress. So I really must get the Duke to go and rouse her up."

This was done; and, after some hesitation, the Duchess refused to get a mantilla, but appeared delighted at the idea of Clara wearing

one, knowing how well it would suit her, from her Spanish appearance.

La Sobrina was now sent for, and asked to select a good mantilla. She chose a white one, saying Mrs. Leicester would look like an angel in it. She also put it on, which, they say, none but a Spanish senorita can do ; and Clara, when dressed, looked lovely indeed. La Sobrina said, moreover, that a black, watered-silk dress was indispensable ; and, to complete the costume, she advised a carnation as the fittest floral ornament.

Clara would only place the piece of orange-blossom in her hair ; and, although the Duchess laughed, her sister was resolved to use the flowers she had received from the hands of Sidney. But when she looked in the glass, she heaved a deep sigh on thinking of her ill-starred marriage. Her present costume reminded her forcibly of that first sacrifice. But she was in too good spirits to meditate long on so un-

happy a theme ; and, taking her handkerchief and gloves, La Sobrina, transported with delight, ran to fetch the other ladies of the house. The grandmother was so pleased, that she said, to crown Mrs. Leicester's costume, she would lend her the old tortoiseshell fan which had been in the case for fifty years. This was considered by her as a great favour.

The Duchess wore a *recherché* and becoming dress, the mysteries of which none but a female could adequately describe.

The two sisters were equally beautiful, but very different in appearance. Fate knew how dissimilar would be their future !

The gentlemen now arrived, accoutred in true *majo* style. Lord Sidney wore a magnificent Granadine jacket. Greville's was plainer, but had more silver ornaments, and was handsomely braided with black. He turned to La Sobrina, as they were leaving the house, and said,—

“No se va usted a los Toros, Señora?”*

“Non mi gusto los Toros,”† was the reply.

And she ran into the house.

* Are you not going to the bull-fights?

† I do not like bull-fights.

CHAPTER X.

THE BULL FIGHT.

AT last, the anxiously - expected hour arrived. The Duchess and her party entered the "Plaza de Toros," and, taking their seats in the box which had previously been hired for them, looked around. The scene that presented itself to their eyes was equally novel and beautiful. Beneath the circle, where the *élite* sit, crowds of majos and majas, in their richest dresses, relieved the dull appearance of that part of the building which was in shade. Se-

veral thousand spectators of the above class were present. The señori exhibit perfect taste in the selection of their dresses, affording an additional proof of the truth of the assertion, that in Andalusia the men are superior to those in other provinces of Spain.

A reputation of this kind is not without beneficial and marked effect on the Andalusian peasantry, who seem desirous that no conduct of theirs shall diminish the favourable impression made by those above them. They are fastidious in dress, while their personal demeanour is civil and almost refined, especially to strangers. Nothing can be more laudable than their ambition to maintain the good character won, not only by their betters, but by themselves; and (to use the words of a former traveller), "as they treat every one they meet with politeness, they expect a return of equal civility. To pass them without the usual salutation of *Vayausted con Dios!* (God be with you!), or

greeting them without bestowing on them the title of *caballeros*, would be risking an insult from people not a little jealous of their claims to reciprocal attention. They are, besides, usually fair and honourable in their dealings."

On the present occasion, no gaudy or ill-judged colours presented themselves to the gaze, but elaborate richness of dress was generally seen. The present portion of the audience had possibly been in their seats many hours, for the *oi polloi* have to scramble for their places when the doors open.

The *ne plus ultra* of a Spaniard's wishes on these occasions, is to obtain a place in the shade. For this purpose, thousands flock—many days before the performance—to the office, where a wooden representation of the Plaza, marked with the different stages of the sun's course, is presented, and the prices vary accordingly. The principal balconies are built so as always to be shaded, and when any of these are to be

hired, all trouble and anxiety is immediately removed.

Our party had not been so fortunate as to secure one of the coveted balconies ; for, in a box directly opposite to the Alcalde, and in blazing sunlight, figured the Duchess and her companions. The gaze of the assembly was riveted on that bright balcony ; and many wondered who the beautiful stranger Spaniard was.

The box contained about a dozen chairs. As a slight compensation for their broiling situation, the trumpeter happened to be placed in their balcony. The first object that attracted their attention was the neighbouring box, in which were some Sevillian señori, whose dresses were indeed most becoming. It is necessary to inspect these costumes minutely before you can become aware of their value ; for, to the casual observer, they are plain rather than striking, especially when in contraposition to the many brilliant colours scattered round.

Composed, for the most part, of dark blue, or marone-coloured cloth, these garments are so profusely braided in various and intricate patterns, that, at the first glance, one might imagine them to be black cloth ; for it is in general with black braid that they are so covered. The dress is edged with velvet ; and the elbows and wrists have also velvet, richly braided, let in, which lightens and enhances the general effect. The jackets are also considerably relieved by masses of silver ornaments in the shape of filagree buttons, acorns, and such other devices as the wearer chooses to select. The waistcoats are, in general, of the same hue and material, and so are the pantaloons, which latter are worn long by the Señori, and not with gaiters, as by the peasants. A sombrero and *faja*, or waistband, completes the attire.

The arena now looked glorious. Its immense dimensions alone, even when empty, attest its grandeur ; but how very different was its ap-

pearance at the present moment ! Crowded to the roof with thousands and thousands of human beings, all in a state of extreme excitement—some waving their hats and handkerchiefs—others brandishing their bright sticks in the air—all were inspired by one expectation, and waited only the sound of the first trumpet to be as silent as if they slept the long sleep of death.

Most of the ladies, of whom there was not so great a number as might have been expected at the bull fight, wore the white mantilla, which is not nearly as becoming to their dark complexions as the black one. However, the size of the course, and the dazzling rays of the sun, did not leave them much *en évidence*.

The balcony immediately opposite that of the Duchess, appeared, from its exterior painting, to be the Royal one. It was closed, lest the interior should meet the vulgar gaze.

Next to it is the Alcalde's box, and about half way round on either side are private boxes.

“The whole scene,” says a recent writer, “is gorgeous with tapestries, and gold, and jewels. It is a theatre in which Pomp and Pleasure are sitting in a thousand human shapes to behold a cruel spectacle.”

The entry of the Alcalde was the signal for the ceremony to commence. He took his seat immediately above the door of the den in which are confined the victims of the day.

One of the Alcalde’s attendants now waved his party-coloured lance, and the trumpet on the opposite side was blown shrilly and clearly. The sound had a magic effect upon the spectators. Hitherto, the arena had been filled with peasants. These were now immediately ejected by the military, who took up their positions at certain intervals within the barriers.

The procession immediately entered through a gate, which had been flung open from within. First, came the five picadors (mounted spear-men), who were to display their skill in the

ring this day, and who, *if all are killed*, are replaced by a subsidiary force reserved in case of such an event. These station themselves in line opposite the Alcalde's box, under which the bulls enter the arena. Then appeared three mules, led by a chulo, richly caparisoned, with scarlet and purple trappings, and panaches, to which are attached many small bells. The mules are brought for the purpose of conveying the dead bulls and horses out of the arena. These fall in directly behind the picadors, parallel with the barriers.

After these, come the three matadors, one of whom was the celebrated Montez, the most renowned in all Spain; and who *par parenthèse* is continually taking his farewells of the public, after the manner of other European stars.

Three chulos followed the matadors. These are they who carry the gaudy cloaks in their hands, in order sometimes to excite the bull, and, at others, for the purpose of diverting his

fury from an upset horseman. Following these, marched six additional chulos, who receive the appellation of banderillos, from their task of fixing the banderillos into the bulls.

This closes the procession. All remain for some moments opposite the Alcalde, ostensibly to obtain his permission to encounter the animals, which being granted "in formâ," the mules retire, and the rest proceed to take up their proper position.

The picadors are not mounted so well as formerly, but too often bestride broken-down old hacks, scarcely able to stand, though still goaded on by the hugest of spurs.

This physical decadence on the part of the steeds, subjects the rider to serious inconvenience and personal danger; for oftentimes a slight caracol might ward off the impetuous attack of the bull; whereas, by their immobility, they receive the charge broadside. Added

to their natural deficiencies, the horses are blindfolded.

The picadors carry long spears, perhaps measuring ten or twelve feet. They have also a small blunt lance. Their costume is of the gayest variety—coloured jackets, either of light red or green velvet, covered profusely with gold or silver tissue, and a kind of silver wings on their shoulders. Huge hats, chamois trowsers, lined with inch cork, and under these steel boots, render them so unwieldy, that when overturned, it is a matter of impossibility to rise, unless with the help of others.

It can, therefore, easily be conceived that they run much risk ; and it is surprising that they are not oftener killed. But the dexterity of the chulos generally prevents this catastrophe.

The matadors, who should have been mentioned “*imprimis*,” are the most renowned, and ought to be the most experienced of all those in the ring ; for although they certainly are not

exposed to so much personal danger as the picadors, yet it is they who administer the penultimate death-stroke to the bulls. They are immensely paid for their services, receiving from thirty to fifty pounds a day. They seldom enter the arena in a dress much under the value of five hundred dollars, or one hundred pounds sterling.

The dress is of rich velvet or cachmere, worked in gold for the jacket and waistcoat; the breeches are also of velvet, and the stockings are silk; while on their heads they only wear a bunch of ribbons fashioned like a cap.

When the Dukes de Nemours and Monpensier were in Spain, Montez presented each of them with a dress that cost six hundred dollars. The Dukes, in return, sent him from Paris a watch bearing on its outside a representation of a bull-fight.

The coolness of the matadors is most remarkable. They frequently sit quietly on the bar-

riers when the infuriated bulls are in their immediate vicinity, looking at them with consummate intrepidity, and appearing thoroughly to know against whom the bull is directing his charge.

The chulos,* who carry the gaudy cloaks which divert the bull's attention from the fallen picadors by throwing the red or purple cloak in his face, are the most insignificant of the actors in this drama. Their dresses resemble those of the matadors, but are of inferior quality.

As soon as the mules have left the arena, the picadors place themselves at intervals of about thirty feet on the left side of the gate from which the bull enters. The matadors go to the right, as well as most of the chulos. The alcalde now waves his hand, and the trumpeter, who is ever on the look-out, obeys the signal. As the trumpet sounds, the bolts are withdrawn from the door of the bull's den; and those that

* Pronounced *thulos*.

perform this feat, slip through a kind of sliding door to the back of the barrier.

Now is a moment of soul-stirring excitement and fearful interest to the Toromaniaists. The hum of a bee could be heard through that vast assembly, every one holding his breath in anxious suspense.

Sometimes, before the gate is even thrown back, the bull rushes madly into the arena, roaring as though the very demons of Avernus had been let loose, and emitting vapour from his nostrils; while, at others, the animal remains in his den, and nothing is discerned but a cavity of darkness. This pause, however, does not last long; for when the beast gets accustomed to the light, which, as well as the sounds of the populace, is excluded from him by the thickness of the door and walls of his prison, in he rushes, tumbling headlong over all that may oppose him in his mad career.

The minute had now arrived when the hor-

rors of this gory spectacle were to be witnessed by our English party for the first time. At this critical moment tears of nervous excitement rushed into the eyes of Clara Leicester. But the novelty of the scene soon took away the sensation, and replaced it by one of intense curiosity.

As the bull appeared, cries arose of "*Bueno Toro!*" "His colour is good!" and other critical exclamations.

In rushed the doomed animal with his *divisa* (composed of a coloured ribbon denoting his owner) attached to his neck. Like the tempestuous waves dashed against the rocky precipice of some wreck-strewn shore—or, as the rumbling of the distant thunder through the cavity of the Grecian mountains heard by the benighted traveller—so the roar of this ferocious bull sounded upon his entrance into the Ronda amphitheatre. Louder and wilder did he raise his shouts for some moments. Then he sud-

denly came to a stand-still, perfectly astounded at the multitudes before him, and dazzled with the light.

He now directs his fiery gaze around the crowds assembled, and appears to flash lightning from his liquid eyes. His colour is coal-black, with one white paw. Much had that little white spot been dreaded by his owner and the true lovers of the sport, for in general it denotes cowardice.

At length, he directs his wild and fevered glances towards the nearest horseman; and with another loud roar he rushes at Joachim Charpa, the hero of the picadors—the Montez of the mounted gladiators.

Well was the picador prepared for the shock. He poised his lance so adroitly, that the infuriated beast was diverted from his first attack; and so ferocious had been his charge, that the opposition he experienced threw him on his side.

Loud cries of "*Que se lo den !*"* resounded ; but the alcalde heeded them not.

Blinded with dust, and maddened by defeat and pain, the bewildered creature raised himself on his knees and gazed desperately around, as if looking for a fresh antagonist. Forward he springs in frantic charge ; but, being encountered by the same man, he was again turned off. Then, as if hoping for success with another picador, he wheeled about, rushed forward, and charged the opposite horseman, whose steed was lifted from the ground and upset with a fearful crash.

After wreaking his vengeance on the fallen horse, the bull was enticed away from its victim

* "*Que se lo den,*" that it may be given to him. This implies that when the bull is killed, the body may be reserved for the favoured one, instead of the owner, who sells the flesh and appropriates the sum to himself. This, however, is often an affair more of honour than of profit ; for the flesh of the bull, slain after suffering horrible torment, is bad, and sells but for a trifle.

by the chulos, who, running close up to him, threw their cloaks in the animal's face, and were pursued in their turn. Then it is, indeed, a case of "*Sauve qui peut*," and the scramble that takes place to the barriers is amusing. Sometimes the fugitives are closely pressed; and one gay inexpressible was caught by the horn of the bull, and helped to lift the wearer over the barrier, who, however, was not in the least hurt; for he reappeared soon after in the brightest of all pea-green pantaloons.

The bull, in the mean time, charged the barrier, which is reckoned a valorous feat; for none but the strongest and fiercest attempt it. The confusion now became extreme. All those who are standing inside are forced to jump into the arena to avoid the fury of the animal. This is a matter of some difficulty to the heavily-equipped soldiers who come rolling in most ungracefully. One, for instance, landed on his head like a clown at Franconi's.

There are doors purposely intended to readmit the bull. These were now thrown open, and he plunged back into the arena, roaring as was his wont. He charged, upset, and unhorsed another picador; then rushed again at Charpa, who had unfortunately lost his spear; but, with inconceivable skill and judgment he turned the beast off for the third time.

The excitement now became truly overwhelming; and shouts of "Bravas!" "Buenos!" and reiterated cries of "*Que se lo den!*" resounded on all sides.

Charpa's horse was now thoroughly exhausted. Trailing his viscera after him, he could proceed no further, and fell under his rider. He was, nevertheless, compelled to rise and be remounted by the picador, who was vociferously told not to charge with that horse. This he attended to, and retired for a short time, but soon returned mounted upon a grey steed. The bull, as if conscious of the power of his adversary, claimed

him in preference to the other picadors, whose horses had suffered much from his charges: he gored them whilst on the ground until they were eviscerated.

After fruitless and unceasing endeavours to unhorse Charpa, the beast appeared to be quite overcome by his own exertions.

When the excitement of a Spanish audience is thus wound up by the exhibition of a good bull like the present, they cannot bear the interest to flag for a second. The chulos accordingly banderilled him. A banderilla is a stick about three feet long, with a sharp barbed hook at one end, covered with a kind of paper netting. This stuck into the neck of the animal torments him.

He now became furious, and, still roaring, repeated his charges which were fluctuating in their success. At one instant upsetting his opponent, he, in his turn, was cast down; sometimes scattering the chulos, at others

goring a fallen horse. One of the picadors was carried out as dead ; and to the credit of two fair Spaniards, they left the scene ; one to faint—the other to endeavour to restore her. The English ladies were not horrified sufficiently to divert their gaze from the bloody scene.

The cries and plaudits of the populace now forced Charpa to dismount and receive his meed of praise,—not mere empty applause, but well-filled purses and showers of silver coins. Many threw their sombreros at his feet as a tribute to his deeds of strength and agility.

After making as graceful an acknowledgment as he could—not a very easy matter in his mailed attire — Charpa remounted ; and the trumpet now sent forth another peal different from the first. This was for “*La muerte del Toro.*”

At this signal, a matador came forward—even Montez himself—holding in one hand the sword, and a red cloak or a stick in the other.

With this last, he excited the bull to charge, which, in his present exhausted condition, he was not, at first, inclined to do. But should he charge properly and quickly, Montez seldom fails to administer his death at one blow. If, however, the animal does not charge well—or, should the matador be inexperienced, a vital part of the body is not found for some time, thus delaying the poor creature's end, and inflicting new wounds. However, directly the heart is touched, the beast falls instantly to the ground, and a chulo called *Puntillero*, from the short knife or puntilla which he carries in his hand, inflicts the "*coup de grâce*" between the horns, and thus despatches him.

The trumpet again sounds, and the mules gallop gaily in. Ropes are attached to the horns of the dead bull, and he is dragged out of the arena by the mules, who return for the dead horses, of which there always are some after the dire encounter. At the death of this

—the black bull with the “*patte blanche*”—cries of “*Que se lo den a Charpa !*” were heard ; which being granted by the *alcalde*, the ear of the animal is severed and presented to the favoured hero, who takes it to the middle of the ring, and, after saluting the *alcalde*, throws it up into the air.

The *sombreros* of the populace are now thrown at the champion’s feet, as on any occasion which particularly deserves applause. Should one of these hats by chance meet with a gore from a bull, greatly is it prized, and scrupulously returned to the owner.

As the dead bull and dead horses disappear, the trumpet again is heard, the bars of another bull are removed, and in rushes a second animal, who goes through a similar encounter to what has been already described. The only variety consists in the various incidental circumstances attendant on a good bull and an inferior one. The career of one beast from the time of his

entry until his death occupies a period of perhaps twenty minutes ; and eight or nine bulls are generally destroyed in one day.

The spectacle lasted nearly three hours.

Thus ended this scene of gore, cruelty, bravery, skill, and tinsel.

“ O, what men dare do ! what men may do ! what men daily do ! not knowing what they do ! ”*

Lamentable indeed is the proof, afforded by this inhuman pastime, of the slow advance of the Spanish nation in public morals and religion ; for both alike condemn the barbarous custom of bull-fights. But, in many respects, Spain is little more than semi-civilised. She has no powerful middle class ; while in facility of communication, which has been properly styled “one of the elements of civilization,” she is inferior to the great nations of Europe. Favoured by nature, and having a fine population, she is withering

* Shakspeare.

under the effects “of centuries of ignorance, bigotry, and despotism.” Public opinion can be scarcely said to exist in the peninsula, or, if it exist, cannot be uttered, for Spain has no free press; and thus the folly and brutality of bull-fights are not openly denounced. In such exhibitions, Nature is violated by the presence of women, who are the most numerous spectators at these atrocious shows. In the words of Jacob the traveller, “how repugnant soever this diversion may appear to every delicate and feeling mind, it is more frequented and admired by ladies than by gentlemen. The former attend these exhibitions in their gayest attire, applaud the address of the inhuman combatants, and feel the greatest solicitude at the different critical turns of the fight.” Incredible as it may seem, Christian priests are also numerous among the spectators at bull-fights; and, to pamper their cruel pleasure, “such days are fixed upon as will not, by a long church-service, prevent the

attendance of the canons and prebendaries who choose to be present; for the chapter, in a body, receive a regular invitation from the *maestranza*.”*

The chief gratification at these sanguinary spectacles, is derived from the complicated agonies of unoffending bulls and horses. Men, too, are not only placed in imminent peril, but are sometimes gored and killed. The possibility of these results is always, with cold-blooded calculation, anticipated; for we are told, that “in a room adjoining the theatre, are a *bier*, a crucifix, and surgical instruments in case of *accidents*!” The men, however, go voluntarily to the bloody work, animated by the love of *celebrity* (let us not call it *fame*), love of money, &c.; while the poor beasts are treacherously captured, and driven by goads into the savage circle. “The noble animal is brought into an arena to make sport, as Samson was

* Doblado's Letters.

among the Philistines. And truly he presents himself to one's imagination, as a creature equally superior with Samson to his tormentors; for the sport which he is brought in to furnish, is that of being murdered. The poor beast is not actuated by a perverse will, and by a brutality which is deliberate. He does but obey to the last the just feelings of his nature. He would not be forced to revenge himself if he could help it. He would fain return to the sweet meadow and the fresh air; but his tyrants will not let him. He is stung with arrows, goaded and pierced with javelins, hewn at with swords, beset with all the devilries of horror and astonishment that can exasperate him into madness; and the tormentors themselves feel that he is in the right, if he can but give bloody deaths to his bloody assassins.”*

These *sports*, if such devilish spectacles can so be called, would no longer be tolerated in

* Leigh Hunt.

Spain, where public morality cultivated, and Christianity understood in that country. England (though formerly it had its own peculiar sins of brutality to answer for) never was disgraced by exhibitions so atrocious and cruel as these holiday diversions of the peninsula, in the enjoyment of which, kings and queens, princes and princesses, nobility of both sexes, and peasant men and women, make common cause, and bedizen themselves with finery to honour the wicked festival. But now, in our country, thanks to public opinion, wisely encouraged and wisely guided, the brutal amusements in which we used to indulge, are rapidly falling into contempt, disuse, and extinction. Bull-baiting, bear-baiting, dog-fighting, cock-fighting, and the like dastardly perpetrations, are prohibited by law ; and so are pugilistic combats between idle ruffians, which now can take place only by stealthy manœuvres. The foolish “backers” of the fists of one man against those of another, were ani-

mated by a love of violent excitement and nefarious gambling, being incapable of any intellectual pleasures. Few of them are now left ; and even these are ashamed to degrade themselves by open advocacy of " the ring." The public voice has condemned prize-fighting ; and our posterity will wonder how such a thing could ever have been tolerated among Englishmen.

Hogarth's terrible prints, called " The Progress of Cruelty," wherein is demonstrated the gradual advance of brutality, from torturing dogs up to murdering men, were at length producing their effects, after silently working for nearly a hundred years. From these ghastly-looking roots, nurtured by the care and culture of others, sprang a lofty tree, bearing the fruit of love and kindness, not only to our fellow-men, but to brute animals. And the legislature, by converting into law the humane and noble bill of the late Mr. Martin, the then member for Galway, rendered brutish persons

liable to punishment for tormenting the defenceless creatures in their power. Eternal honour to Martin and our law-makers !

A man of genius, like Hogarth, is seldom wrong in the means he adopts for curbing our bad propensities ; and they are sure to tell in the long run.

Spain, however, still clings to the ferocity of its bull-fights. It is no excuse for Spaniards that this deplorable amusement did not *originate* with them, but, as it is said, with the Moors ; because the guilt is as manifest in the adoption, as in the origination. In his notes to Don Quixote, the late Mr. Lockhart coincides in a belief “ that the Spaniards derived their passion for bull-fights from the Moors. Indeed,” adds he, “ in most old ballads of Spain, descriptive of bull-fights, the personages are Moorish.” And then he gives a specimen of one of them, which he translates into English with infinite spirit and vigour. The hero is an alcaydé named

Ganzul, who, after eight Moorish lords have been slain by the bulls in a public conflict, appears in the arena, and, having defeated three beasts loosed at the same time against him, is confronted by one of superior strength and ferocity, called Harpado of Xarama, which, in a long and desperate encounter, is slaughtered by Ganzul. Admirable indeed, and characteristic is the following description of this supposed invincible bull :—

“From Guadiana comes he not, he comes not from
Xenil,
From Guadalarif of the plain, or Barvès of the hill ;
But where from out the forest burst Xarama's waters
clear,
Beneath the oak-trees was he nurs'd, this proud and
stately steer.

“Dark is his hide on either side, but the blood within
doth boil,
And the dun hide glows, as if on fire, as he paws to the
turmoil.
His eyes are jet, and they are set in crystal rings of
snow ;
But now they stare with one red glare of brass upon
the foe.

“ Upon the forehead of the bull the horns stand close
and near ;
From out the broad and wrinkled skull like daggers they
appear ;
His neck is massy, like the trunk of some old knotted
tree,
Whereon the monster’s shagged mane, like billows curl’d,
ye see.

“ His legs are short, his hams are thick, his hoofs are
black as night,
Like a strong flail he holds his tail, in fierceness of his
might ;
Like something molten out of iron, or hewn from forth
the rock,
Harpado of Xarama stands to abide the alcaydé’s
shock.”

“ Though the common opinion assigns to
bull-fights a Moorish origin,” says the Modern
Traveller, “ there is some reason to believe that
they were previously introduced into Spain by
the Roman conquerors, who are said to have
derived them from the Greeks. The practice
was prohibited by Pius V., under pain of excom-
munication incurred *ipso facto* ; but his suc-
cessors granted several mitigations on behalf of

the *toreadors*. Bull fights were abolished in Spain by Charles IV., in 1805 ; but, to the disgrace of the Supreme Junta, were revived in 1809, at Santa Maria, for the amusement of the *enlightened* people of Cadiz, and in honour of Lord Wellesley !”

CHAPTER XI.

THE MARQUEZA DI SALVALTIERRA AND HER
TWO DAUGHTERS.

THE fair was now over ; and to the crowds and clamour in the streets of Ronda, succeeded a perfect calm. With the departure of the matadors, the gaiety of the town departed, and the spirits of the people became proportionally depressed.

But the Senoritas were still here, and promenaded the shady terraces of the Alameda every evening as the sun declined.

The English party also remained, although it is customary for every visitor to desert the town directly the bull fights are over. Besides, the strangers chiefly consist of English officers, who are always obliged to be back at Gibraltar by the twenty-fourth of May, our beloved Queen's birthday. This, however, would be no restriction on any of the Duke's friends, except Greville, and he had obtained three months' leave, at the intercession of his Grace.

Since the day on which the Duchess had visited the Marcheza's house, an intimacy had sprung up between her and Conschia, which, in time, ripened into friendship. The embarrassment necessarily existing between foreigners, at a first introduction, had ceased. Her Grace was delighted at the simplicity and artless manner, combined with warmth of feeling, evinced by the young Spaniard. This candour and open-heartedness supplied a pleasant novelty to the Duchess, who had encountered few such

characters in her plotting and ambitious career ; and she now felt, for the first time, how delightful it was to have a woman of her own age to speak to, though not exactly to confide in ; for the Duchess had no confidences to make. Very different was it with Conschia di Salvatierra, who had secrets of importance ; and, in her intensity of feeling and generous reliance on her new friend, had confided to her Grace most of the incidents of her life.

It appeared by these disclosures, that the early part of Conschia's existence had been eventful ; and that a kind of mystery attached to her birth, which she had never been able to solve. Nevertheless, from the first and subsequent occasions, the Duchess inferred that Conschia, although she was called " La Marcheza," had no claim to that title, for she was the acknowledged junior of her sister ; but the mother, from their infancy, had always paid to her so much more respect than she accorded to Ursula—

and, indeed, educated her in so superior a manner—that she had not only obtained the title, but had been accustomed to take the lead in all household arrangements, to which Ursula, who was of a quiet disposition, easily submitted. She saw, without a murmur, the universal preference given to her younger sister ; and knowing that she and Consolia were not full sisters, had imagined that she herself was a natural daughter. Under this impression, she felt she must be inferior to “La Marcheza.” This was also the supposition in the family ; but it was erroneous.

About twenty-five years previously to the present time, the Marcheza di Salvatierra, mother of the two young ladies, was the reigning beauty of Cadiz. Rich, young, and married to an hidalgo descended from one of the most ancient and noble families in Spain, she imagined herself to be the happiest woman in Cadiz. The Marquez adored her and his infant daughter, and they all looked

forward to years of happiness. But alas ! it was not so destined.

At the close of the Peninsular war, and after the British Army had proceeded to France, many wounded English officers were prevented from accompanying the career of the victorious troops, and remained behind in Spain. Among these disabled military gentlemen, was a Colonel * * * , who, totally incapable of accompanying the Duke of Wellington, although a great friend of that hero, and rapidly rising in his profession, had taken up his abode in Cadiz. At first, he never went out, or mixed in the gaiety which at that time was prevalent in the city. Returning health, however, renewed the taste for former pleasures ; and, among many acquaintances, he became intimate with the Marquez and Marqueza di Salvatierra. Of all the Spaniards he knew, these were to him the kindest and most sympathetic.

But ill did he requite the hospitality bestowed

on him. The unremitting courtesy of his host was met by neglect and treachery ; and for the civility of the fair Marqueza, he returned destructive love.

Dazzled and pleased by the Colonel's exclusive and devoted attendance, the Spanish wife soon fell into the snare ; and, in a short time, not only allowed all Cadiz to see and talk of her *liaison*, but returned the love of her seducer tenfold. The husband, only, was blind to what was going on ; and, in the midst of the universal scandal, he was found dead in his own apartment. How he came by his death, remains a mystery even to this day ; but, from the indecent haste of the funeral, and the reckless conduct of the Marqueza afterwards, such unpleasant rumours floated about the city, and her reputation fell into such bad odour, that she soon fled to Seville, accompanied by her paramour, and taking with her the infant Ursula.

Some months after this, Consucia was born.

The Marqueza continued to reside at Seville for some time with Colonel * * * , and seemed perfectly happy.

Unfortunately, in many parts of Spain, the marriage vow is so lightly considered, that the Marqueza felt no qualms of conscience when reviewing her late conduct. Nay, she complied with her religious observances as strictly as ever, and regularly attended mass. Indeed, in every respect, she lived with calm outward decorum, acquiescing in the external regulations of society, and not feeling one pang on having violated essential and sacred duties.

At length, the excitement and novelty of his present mode of life having worn off, the Colonel became tired of La Marqueza and his child ; and one day told the former that business of the utmost importance summoned him to England.

This was the first shock the fair, but frail, Marqueza ever experienced ; and now that she

saw the probability of losing her lover, she began to feel what her conduct had brought her to. Remorse preyed upon her from the period of the Colonel's departure.

For some time she consoled herself with the hope of her betrayer's return. Alas ! years passed, and he did not make his appearance. From the day that they parted on the banks of the Guadalquiver, she never saw him more ! Stung to the quick by his desertion, she proudly refused a pension which he proposed to settle on her. She herself would support his child, though he had abandoned it as well as her. Women act resolutely when their love is outraged.

La Marqueza now transferred to his child the affection she had formerly lavished on the Colonel ; and dedicated all her trouble and time to the education of Consencia.

As years passed over, the favourite daughter was surprised at her mother's conduct towards Ursula. The amiability and gentleness of Con-

scia's temper and manners, led her to love her sister, and to take no advantage of the preference shown to her by their mother. Still, Ursula suffered ; for, through her sister, she had lost her dearest hope. Her lover, the young Petrez, had forsaken her for Conschia ; but, as a punishment for his infidelity, he was repeatedly refused by the young Marcheza ; and, in despair, banished himself to the Manillas in the Indian Archipelago, subject to Spain.

The Marqueza dowager had only lately gone to reside in Ronda, where she possessed a house given her by her husband. She and her daughters were located in this town when they formed the acquaintance of the Duchess of Ellingfield.

Not only had Conschia confided to the Duchess all her thoughts and suspicions as to her origin, but she also betrayed her dearest hope—her dream. She was in love. She had become

enamoured with the quiet and retiring Henry Greville ; and in disclosing this secret to her English friend, she found herself greatly relieved. Her Grace was much surprised and annoyed at this accidental meeting ; for she considered Greville of too melancholy a disposition to return the passionate love of the young Marcheza. Nevertheless, by her contrivance, Conschia and Greville met over and over again ; ostensibly, on the part of the former, for the sake of learning English, which the Duchess undertook to teach her young friend, having solicited Greville to assist her.

One day, these three were sitting in the Duchess's room, the rest of the party being out, when Greville abruptly asked Conschia to sing a Spanish song. " Not," added he, " one of the lively songs. Pray, *Senorita*, sing a pathetic ballad."

Conschia took the guitar ; and, after playing a

few chords, began, in a sweet and plaintive voice, the following :—

“Porque ti quiero tanto,
Porque ti ho conocido,”
etc., etc.

As she finished this beautiful air, the two ladies were surprised to perceive the emotion of Greville. How true the sentiment was to his feelings ! He thought how happy and peaceful would still have been his life, had he not known and loved the rich English heiress. This feeling so agitated him, that he abruptly quitted the room.

“Querida mia,” exclaimed the Duchess. “Surely your love is returned. Did you remark my cousin’s emotion ?”

“Si, ducheza, si,” replied Consacia ; “but I fear ’twas not for me. Do you know, my friend, I begin to think he is in love, but I feel it is not with me. No Spanish woman can mistake love, when evinced for herself.”

“But you must not despair,” rejoined the Duchess. “Remember, you have promised to come and see our people and country ; and then we shall find out whether Greville has an attachment there, and who the lady is ; for I intend to invite him to come to Scotland and see me, whenever he can get away from his duties.”

“Ah, dearest,” said Conszia, “but how long it will be before I can leave Spain ! Until Ursula marries, I never will consent to leave her with my mother. It would break her heart—indeed it would.”

Time wore on ; and her Grace’s party had now no wish to prolong their stay in Ronda. They had remained above a month in a place where few visitors ever sojourn more than a week. It was accordingly settled that they were to proceed to Seville ; and as their movements were not attended with much ceremony, they were soon *en route*.

The parting from Conschia was the severest privation the Duchess experienced ; and the young Marqueza wept for more reasons than the loss of her Grace's society.

CHAPTER XII.

A CONFESSION.

LORD SIDNEY and Mrs. Leicester were also sorry to leave Ronda. During their stay, so many opportunities had occurred for their being together and alone, that, at last, from the mere force of habit, they took no pains to conceal their preference for each other. Regardless of honour and character, and unmindful of inevitable consequences, they persisted in their guilt. Still, to affirm that Clara was happy, would be false; for whenever she found herself alone, the

misery of her wretched position forced itself upon her soul. She thought, with bitter tears, of her innocent children whom she had neglected, and who, as they grew up, would be taught to despise her; and although she did not care much for the wrong she was committing towards Mr. Leicester, whose unfeeling conduct seemed to palliate her transgression, still, in spite of herself, remorse, even on *his* account, would often take possession of her.

Independently of these throes of conscience, Clara was forced to endure another anguish, not only in the dread of discovery by her sister, but from terror at the shame in which she must inevitably be overwhelmed when it should be known in what manner she had requited the kindness and affection lavished on her. Such feelings, however, were intermittent. They were torturing in solitude; but the moment Lord Sidney Tresham appeared, they “made themselves air, into which they vanished,” like those

bewildering agents of Destiny, the witches in "Macbeth," when the Thane burned in desire to question them further.

The night before the day on which our travellers had arranged to leave Ronda, Mrs. Leicester, finding herself unable to rest, and being in a state of utter despondency, if not despair, determined suddenly to be herself the first to reveal her guilt.}]

Accordingly she rose, and wrapping herself in a large shawl, stepped noiselessly across the *salle à manger*, and knocked gently at the Duchess's door. She waited for some time; but no answer being returned to her summons, she again knocked, though still softly.

"Come in," was the grateful response; and as she raised the latch of the door and passed its threshold, her heart beat with such intolerable fluttering, that she could hardly advance to the bed whereon her Grace was now reclining.

At last she took courage and advanced. Then casting herself on a chair at the side of the bed, and pressing her sister's hand, she burst into tears.

"Mary! dearest sister! spare me! spare me!" were the only words that Mrs. Leicester could utter.

"What means this emotion, Clara?" interrupted her Grace. "Pray be more composed, especially at this time of night. The noise may attract the Duke's attention, and there will be a scene. What is the matter? Speak! but in a less agitated manner."

"Duchess!" gasped Clara, "I have come to throw myself at your feet—to implore your forgiveness for the greatest crime one can commit towards a sister."

"Stop, Clara," interrupted her Grace. "If you have come only to accuse yourself, I must not allow you to talk in this manner. You have never in any way offended me, or in-

deed——” and the Duchess, whatever she might have been about to say, hesitated, and then ceased to speak.

“ My sister, I have—I have deceived you !” ejaculated Clara. “ I have abused your kindness! I have taken advantage of your protection to commit a serious crime. I have outraged all rules of society. I feel I am no longer worthy to reside with you. But, Mary—dearest Mary !—for the sake of our own poor mother, remember that I am your sister, and spare me.”

“ Clara,” interposed her Grace, withdrawing her hand from that of her sister, “ Clara, you have taken me so by surprise, that I am almost at a loss what to say to you. I never expected such a confidence; but to spare you the pain of further self-accusal, which must be humiliating, I will confess to you that I have already observed your conduct with Lord Sidney Tresham, and have thought it dishonourable. Is it that

of which you were about to speak ? I assure you, unless you had voluntarily come forward in this manner, I should never have questioned you on the subject. But *now* I feel constrained to ask if what I suspected is the fact ?”

“ Alas ! most true,” sobbed Mrs. Leicester.
“ But——”

“ Oh, that was all I wished to know,” said the Duchess, coldly. “ You have answered my question.”

“ But,” resumed Mrs. Leicester, “ I am come now to tell you all the circumstances, and you will see I am not so much to——”

“ I do not wish to learn any more of the circumstances attached to so unhappy an affair,” interposed the Duchess, again stopping Clara’s words. “ You have told me all I wish to know.”

“ Oh, dear sister,” said Mrs. Leicester, in a piteous voice, “ let me implore you not to turn me out of your doors.”

“Mrs. Leicester! Clara!” stammered out her Grace, “all this is foolish. I have known your secret for some time—at least, I guessed it. So don’t talk in that extraordinary manner about turning you out. If, when I first saw your danger, I had taken any steps to save you, I should have been justified in so doing. But, unfortunately, I neglected that opportunity; and it is not likely now that I should behave in a cruel manner, which could be of no possible advantage to either of us. Besides, I consider myself to blame in not having told the Duke.”

“Kind, affectionate, and generous sister!” exclaimed Clara; “then you have not told the Duke?”

“No, I have not,” responded her Grace, “nor does he suspect you. If he did, you would not be here.”

“That only makes your conduct towards me the more kind,” rejoined Mrs. Leicester. “But what am I to do?—I cannot continue thus. I

am miserable, hateful to myself. Tell me—oh, tell me, what I am to do.”

“Why,” replied the Duchess, “no good could possibly come from an abrupt and mistimed confession to my husband, which would only tend to create a scandal in this quiet foreign town, where we have received much attention and kindness from the inhabitants. At best, such a disclosure would but annoy the Duke, to whom, at least, you owe some gratitude. Therefore, for his sake, as well as mine, forbear from giving publicity to an event which must inevitably lower his position in the eyes of the Rondeños, and would be but a poor return for the friendship he has already bestowed on you. No; bad as matters are at present, let them rest until, without seeming precipitancy, Sidney Tresham’s departure may take place. Then, and then only, may you confide in the Duke, if such should still be your wish. But remember,” and she took Mrs. Leicester’s hand,

“ what has passed between us this night, will not escape from my lips. And now, Clara, I recommend you to return to your room ; and let me caution you, for heaven’s sake, to respect my company and character sufficiently to restrain your conduct, and to remember the delicate position I am now placed in with regard to yourself.”

“ Fear not, good and kind sister,” replied Mrs. Leicester ; “ your generosity has imposed a debt upon me which I scarcely dare to think I can ever repay. Yet I will do all in my power to make my future conduct appear such as will prove my gratitude. Farewell ! good night, generous and tender-hearted sister !”

And giving the Duchess a fond embrace, Clara retired from the apartment as noiselessly as she had entered it, and hastily regained her own chamber.

CHAPTER XIII.

FATAL NEWS.

THE London season was now fully over. Lord Clementsford's health was, however, in so precarious a state, that it was deemed advisable he should not proceed to the country, according to his former custom and present desire, but remain in town for the winter. His lady had started some time previously for Homberg to renew her wasted strength after the dissipation of the past season, and her movements

were detailed in the public prints ; but her letters to her family were of rare occurrence. The Lady Grace was the only companion of her father ; but she was indeed his dearest friend.

What moments of calm reflection this young woman now enjoyed ! London, if not disturbed by the season, is a desert to the fashionable. To live there in the wrong time is to be more alone than in any country place : no visits are paid or received ; there are no dinners, or giggling country misses hurrying about, to learn and see the latest fashions, and lisp their regret at not having heard Mario that season.

But solitude is seldom oppressive to persons of intellectual resources, who have always their own thoughts, or the thoughts of others in immortal books, to resort to when alone. "Alone !" Can such persons ever be alone, when they may summon before them the illus-

trious presence of philosophers, historians, and poets? Lady Grace was fond of books, and possessed a wisely-selected library. Even had it not been so, she would have found in her own contemplations sufficient to beguile the time and keep off the remotest approaches of *tædium vitæ*. Among other subjects which solicited her mind, was a dreamy, though somewhat clouded vision of the future; and notwithstanding Sidney Tresham, since his residence abroad, had neglected and mortified her, she looked forward with interest to the time appointed for the fulfilment of her engagement to him.

But the anticipation was not, as it ought to be, without disquietude; and she felt uneasy at not having confided to her parents the secret of her affiance. She knew, however, that she was under the most sacred promises to her lover, not to reveal the contract by which they were mutually bound.

Still, momentous as such a subject could not fail to be, it did not wholly engross the thoughts of this admirable person, nor withhold her from "tasting the luxury of doing good." Feeling that, in her station of life, Charity had claims upon her, she earnestly obeyed its dictates, visiting the poor in wretched tenements, administering to their wants, and assisting, in hospitals, to alleviate the sufferings of invalids. In thus affording substantial relief to her necessitous and afflicted fellow-creatures, she passed her time during the winter, brooding over sweet and bitter thoughts.

Lady Grace had learned the advantage of self-reliance. It was not pride, nor any undue estimate of her own character and attainments, which made her resolve to put more trust in herself than in any other. Her confidence in this respect was not incompatible with humility. She acted rightly, because she thought rightly; and this was the more fortunate, in-

asmuch as no one was about her capable of affording counsel when needed, or of directing her energies. She loved her mother, and respected her father ; but in neither could Grace discern those qualities to which she might look for aid and guidance in any sudden emergency.

To a person of her liberal and sensitive mind, much happiness was derived from the fact that her marriage with Tresham would relieve him from great embarrassment. She knew he had faults, for he had told her so himself, though, no doubt, with material reservations. He was crafty enough to believe, that what was suppressed would not be suspected, because of the apparent candour and fulness of his confessions. Why should a man, who seemed so open and ingenuous, even to his own injury, be guilty of any concealment ? Lady Grace did not distrust him ; and one of the sweetest of her pleasant hopes was the prospect of

reforming the character of her lover. Months passed away in this dream of her innocent heart.

But a bitter trial awaited her. The cup of happiness was to be dashed from her lips.

Grace was in the habit of perusing the daily papers—those wonderful repositories of facts from every quarter of the globe, and of the original emanations of master-minds. One morning in April, she had taken up a journal of the day, and, having read for more than an hour, was on the point of setting the paper aside, when her own name caught her eye. Confused and fascinated, she looked at the heading of the paragraph: “DEATH OF LADY CLEMENTSFORD.” Though Grace was stunned by this fatal announcement, she read on with dizzy eyes: “At G——, Upper Rhine, the Countess of Clementsford expired suddenly.” The writer now enlarged, in the usual style, upon the virtue, beauty, and family connections of the

deceased. Then came the following lines :
“ The absence from her daughter, Lady Grace Dalzell, and the publicity which attended the late elopement of a female relative of the Countess, seemed to have much distressed her ladyship, and hastened her end.”

Though afflicted and bewildered beyond expression, Grace read the paragraph again and again, summoning all the powers of her mind to detect any inconsistency which might induce a hope that the statement was erroneous ; and, at length, the mystery of the last few lines, joined to the occurrence of her mother's death, inclined her to doubt its truth. Resolved, however, to know more, if more could at present be known, Lady Grace rang the bell, and desired the servant to bring her the paper of the previous day. The man did not evince his general alacrity in obeying his mistress's commands ; but, after an unusual delay, returned, bringing the newspaper, with, as Lady Grace

thought, a half-concealed smile on his countenance. She summarily dismissed him, however, while he was attempting to excuse the delay.

Her agitation was extreme as she searched the columns of the journal. Nevertheless, she could not fail to perceive that the paper was crumpled and soiled as though it had been pored over by the servants. At length, her greedy eyes caught these words :

“ELOPEMENT IN HIGH LIFE.—The fashionable world has lately been thrown into much excitement,” and so forth, according to the pattern and manner in such cases. News being scarce in the dead season of the year, the papers were too glad to dilate on all the particulars with which they were cognizant touching the event in question. The names of Mrs. Leicester and Lord Sidney Tresham were mentioned ; so was the town in Spain where the guilty parties had met. In fact, all the painful

details were remorselessly dwelt on, to the unutterable anguish of Lady Grace. She was wild with agony of mind, and felt her senses departing from her.

Approaching steps were heard : the door opened, and Lord Clementsford stood before his daughter. She tried to run to him ; and exclaiming, " My Father ! " fell senseless at his feet.

* * * *

For days Lady Grace was confined to her bed with a severe fever, during the height of which she was delirious. Ah ! the wretchedness of a sick-bed frenzy, when the patient dimly suspects his own incoherence, yet cannot escape from it ! The sufferer's father watched over her continually, and trembled for the consequences of her malady. But she gradually recovered, and Lord Clementsford had eventually the happiness of

seeing his daughter regain her strength. He knew, however, only half the truth ; for he attributed her illness exclusively to the shock of seeing the announcement of her mother's death so abruptly and unexpectedly.

CHAPTER XIV.

SIGHT-SEEING IN SEVILLE.—A VISION OF
THE ALCAZAR.

*“ Quien no ha visto Sevilla,
No ha visto maravilla.”*

TRAVERSING the Patio of the Hospital of the “ Caridad ” in Seville, we perceive our English party preceded by a Sister of Charity, who is attracting their attention to a fountain in the centre of the Court, said to have been designed by Murillo.

The chapel of this hospital is rendered famous

by the pictures painted expressly for it by the great Sevillian master.

It is reported that Murillo's name having been put down as a member when the hospital was about to be built, he found it very inconvenient to furnish the requisite sum of money for his subscription. In lieu of this, he promised to adorn the walls of its chapel with paintings, instead of paying his share in money.

Murillo fulfilled his promise; and the pictures presented by him, would, if sold now, produce sufficient funds to build fifty similar institutions. At that period, however, a sum equal to thirty pounds sterling was reckoned high for his San Thomaso; whereas, lately, a king, and, since then, an English marquis, have in vain offered as many thousands for that *chef-d'œuvre*.

In the chapel are six Murillos. The first, a characteristic subject, is Saint John taking a sick man to the Hospital. It represents the

holy man bending under the weight of his burden ; but, without being aware from whom the assistance comes, his charitable purpose is aided by an Angel. The expression of gratitude depicted on the Saint's face is very fine ; as also is the light thrown on the whole work.

Moses striking the Rock is the second. This is a large and magnificent picture of a semi-circular form. The grouping is fine, and the faces of the women and children are derived from members of his own family.

The pendant of the above is Christ's miracle of the loaves and fishes. This is preferred by some to the Moses, although the grouping is not perhaps so skilful.

Beneath the two, are seen the Agnus Dei, and the Salvator Mundi, both exceedingly soft and graceful.

"The Annunciation," which completes the six, is remarkable for the perfection of the lily therein painted, which rivals the finest flower

ever blown. One is tempted to touch it, to ascertain that it is not a natural blossom attached to the painting.

M. Baillé, the guide, said the other pictures by different masters were scarcely worth inspection, especially after seeing the above-named specimens of Murillo's marvellous art.

An old French pensioner in the court-yard attracted the attention of the visitors, who purchased some chains of nuns' hair, which he amused himself by making and selling.

Baillé now conducted the party to the "Fabrica de Tobacco."

This fine structure resembles, in its exterior, a palace, rather than a manufactory of the noxious weed. It is covered with towers and spires, and its north front is very striking. One department is devoted to snuff-making, the chopping and various other processes connected with which, make the beholder sneeze incessantly.

In the Fabrica of cigars, four thousand women

are employed. A duenna escorts a party through this department, to protect visitors from the “*jeux d'esprit*” of these young ladies. They are paid according to the number of cigars they make *per diem*. It is said that an industrious individual may construct about thirty thousand in one day!

The Alcazar, or Royal Palace of the Moors, was the next object to be viewed,—M. Baillé facetiously remarking that it would be like passing from Gehenna to Fairy-land. The exterior of this palace has “a miserable appearance;” but when the interior is reached, then, indeed, you may fancy yourself transported to a scene of “the Arabian Nights.” To persons who, while in Spain, have not the fortune to view the Alhambra, the Alcazar of Seville is almost an abundant recompense, except that it is on a much smaller scale. The Ambassadors’ Hall is beautiful and lofty, but small in its area. The ceilings and walls are richly decorated with ara-

besques, and the floor is paved with various coloured marbles. Through each of the four elegant arches is a perspective view either of another hall with its receding marble pillars, or of a patio with a fountain in the centre. The sound and sight of trickling water renders the *coup-d'œil* quite enchanting. The horse-shoe arches of two of the entrances, which, in general, are opposite to each other, in the centres of the walls, are supported on white marble columns. The tessellated porcelain and the sombre, distant views of other chambers, transport one to the feudal ages of Spanish chivalry.

It would not be difficult, without the aid of opium, to conjure up in those decorated halls a vision of ages long gone by. We may summon before the imagination a group of turbaned Moors, with a vast assemblage of attendants in gorgeous costumes, and carrying scimitars studded with gems. They are standing in the audience chamber. A noble Spaniard—some

ambassador of a distant province — bends his knee before the swarthy despot ; but his eyes flash fire at the haughty indifference of the Mahometan to his suit. The suppliant is uncovered, and his long, white plume trails the ground ; his rapier—often drawn in the cause of chivalry—hangs idly by his side ; and the proud Don bends to the infidel in vain.

Sweet music now floats through the air, while the perfume of orange-blossoms—the tinkling of tambourines—the distant view of houris moving in measure to soft sounds,—fascinate the senses, which, yielding to the charm, are

“ Lull’d in these bowers with dances and delight.”

Behold ! A change has come over the scene. The music has suddenly ceased : the dancing-girls have disappeared ; and the Moorish Chief has arisen from his chair of state. Pointing, with a derisive gesture, to the archway, where

are standing the simply-attired attendants of the Spanish ambassador, he moves forward pompously, as a signal that the conference is over. Deeply does the Don feel this insult.

The train sweeps by him as he kneels ; and the inferior Moors draw their garments round them, that they might not be profaned by the touch of the "Christian dog." Amazed and confused, the Spaniard's blood boils ; and, starting up, he summons, with a hasty sign, his attendants to follow him. The silence of the Hall is disturbed only by echoes of their footsteps, until they reach the *Patio de los Leones*. There the Spanish leader stops to collect his ruffled ideas, while his senses are again soothed by soft and luxuriou perfume, and the coolness of the air at the side of the fountain, where richly-carved lions are casting forth from their mouths the perfumed liquid. The Spaniard forgets his injurious treatment in the fascination by which he is surrounded.

Presently, a loud, ringing sound rends the air.—A gong has been struck.

“For what,” asks he, “is this blessed stillness thus disturbed?”

“The sound,” replied the Moor, whom he had addressed, “announces that the head of the Gallician enemy who arrived yesterday, and who insulted the presence of our Chief, has fallen before the feet of the Harem,* assembled to witness the execution.”

Maddened with rage, and urged by terror, the Spanish noble rushes to the last archway;—where, within a few paces, stands his horse. Having reached the threshold, and shouting to his companions, “Guerra! Guerra! Guerra!” he endeavours to mount his steed.

At this juncture, from behind the columns in

* The word “Harem,” signifying *prohibited*, *sacred*, &c., is applied both to the females of a family, and to the apartments which they occupy.—LANE.

every direction, start forth fifty turbaned blacks,
and bind the Spaniard head and foot.

Will another sun set on that noble head? .If
so, it will be the last.

CHAPTER XV.

BYRON'S GUIDE. A SPANISH BALLET. THE
CATHEDRAL OF SEVILLE.

HOURS had passed in the inspection of the Alcazar by our party, who were now forced to return home, as a ballet had been announced for that evening by their guide.

Dinner was dispatched hurriedly. A house had been engaged for the performance by M. Baillé, whose daughter was nominated as one of the principal dancers.

The guide and a blind guitar-player be-

guiled the time previous to the ballet ; the latter with his instrument and voice imitated the sound of various animals and an old woman fighting with them.

Our party now proceeded to the house appointed for the performance of the ballet ; and, to their surprise, they found it crowded with spectators, who, doubtless, considering it a public national amusement, had intruded. Some of the señoritas were dressed very well in genuine Andalusian costumes, with exceedingly short garments ; some *à la* Duvernay, or Fanny Ellsler, for these are the models which a few Spanish ladies select to copy ; others, “ *à leur propre goût.*”

Mademoiselle Baillé was resplendent in a multi-colored petticoat, and styled herself “ La Novia Gitana ” (the Gipsy Bride). How different were the beautiful creatures we now saw, from the real Gitanas at Ronda ! The chief characteristic of the latter was gross vulgarity ;

the present dancers were angels of grace and elegance in comparison. Their dresses bore the most minute inspection, and were composed either of blue, pink, or lilac silk, trimmed with black lace or horse-hair. Their hair was most tastefully dressed, and adorned with flowers.

Before fully describing the daughter, let us say a little more respecting the parent Baillé.

He was BYRON'S GUIDE.

To those two words he owed his greatest success, and in them is comprised nearly the whole of his history. Though born in Africa, of an English mother and French father, M. Baillé is reckoned a *Spaniard*, but John Bull exuded from his face. He is "fat, fair, and forty," a good guide, and celebrated for his wit and *calembourgs*, of which he is very profuse. His jests and puns would have made Plato smile. Still that invaluable precept, "Believe only half you see, and nothing you hear," should be remembered with him. According to his account,

Byron was charmed with him, and gave him a manuscript, or rather wrote some verses in his Strangers' Book, describing the Guide's services.

This Book was at last stolen from Baillé, after he had repeatedly refused large sums of money from British travellers for so interesting a literary relic of our poet. If any testimony is required respecting an individual who attracted Byron's fickle taste, a traveller may be recommended, when he goes to Seville, to enquire for M. Baillé; for to his good humour and better services he adds a knowledge of many languages, the most useful quality of a Guide.

Of his daughter, it must be said that her dancing was very good, although, for a "*danseuse*," she was fearfully *embonpoint*, and squinted considerably. "La Nena," who fascinated the London world for a season, charmed us much on the present occasion with

her agile, graceful, and impassioned movements.

The Cachucha, Gitana, Olè, &c., were in turn performed, in all which the dancers contort their bodies wonderfully. The Spaniards appear to value dancing in proportion to the strangeness of attitudes on the part of the performer, which rather shocks sober Englishmen. El Olè appeared to be the favourite dance ; and La Baillé, who, *par parenthèse*, appeared to suffer much from the heat, executed it to perfection.

The subject of this particular dance may be thus described : the lady requests a sombrero from one of the audience, which she flings on the ground, and then performs a variety of feats around it, putting her body into most inconceivable positions.

All this appears to gratify the Spaniards immensely, as the “Saleros” and “Bravas” testify, and affords them ample opportunity to

indulge in puns, which may be very amusing when understood.

What the dance is intended to suggest or represent, would be difficult to say; but as it is sometimes performed by mere children, it would not be fair to impute other than the most innocent ideas to the exuberant motions required in its execution.

The next day was devoted to an inspection of the Cathedral, with all its wonders; such as its enormous organs (one of which has five thousand three hundred pipes), its magnificent high altar, its gloomy Capilla Real, its numerous other chapels, its hundred windows, its relics, pictures, &c. The great edifice itself (the largest and most stately in Spain) stands on the spot formerly occupied by the chief Moorish mosque. Among the pictures, is the famous San Antonio by Murillo. When the eye becomes accustomed to the peculiar light in which this great work of art is placed, its

beauties are fully recognized. The toe of the Saint, protruding from the priestly garb, is in itself a *chef-d'œuvre*. Immense sums of money have been tendered for this picture; and it is said that Louis Philippe and an English Marquis offered as much as thirty thousand pounds for it fruitlessly.

In one chapel were several specimens of the works of Zurbaran, another famous master of the Sevillian school of painters. The colouring of these pictures, especially the effect of light and shade on some white garments, was exquisite; but the drawing of the figures appeared stiff, hard, and destitute of variety.

Two portraits of Archbishops of Seville deserve notice.

An anecdote of Marshal Soult was related by M. Baillé, to which may be attached some credit. It is reported of him, that when the French troops occupied Seville, a pair of exquisite pictures by Murillo were concealed from

the prying search of the soldiers. This had been skilfully managed by three Spanish patriots, one of whom, however, betrayed his trust, in hopes of obtaining a great reward.

Upon the fact coming to Marshal Soult's knowledge, he sent a message to the possessors of the pictures, ordering them to surrender those works of art to him. This gracious demand not being acceded to, he again demanded the pictures, and this time a party of armed soldiers accompanied his messenger, with the pleasing intelligence that if the paintings were not speedily given up, the two men who had concealed them would instantly be shot. This had the desired effect.

In pointing out these famous works of Murillo to a friend, at Soult's house in Paris, the Marshal said, "I prize those two pictures more than any in my collection." On being asked the reason for so marked a preference,

he replied that they had saved the lives of two men in Seville ; but he omitted the details.

The sequel of the story shows that the traitor who had betrayed his companions was sacrificed ; for he was murdered by them with their “cuchillos ” or small knives.

The grandeur of the Seville Cathedral is excessive. Many people admire it more than St. Peter's at Rome. The lofty Gothic arches appear to lose themselves in numerous branches in all directions, giving the whole a most venerable appearance ; while the subdued light, which varies at the different hours of day, imparts a sombre tone to the entire edifice.

The relics in this vast fane are estimated as possessing a value beyond calculation. Two pieces of the “Cross,” and a thorn that had pressed our Saviour's brow, were magnificently set in gold and precious stones. A finger of San Ferdinand, which had been bitten off by

“El Condé de Montemar,” is also exhibited. The offender, however, atoned for his sacrilege, by his deeds in America, and likewise by restoring the finger in an enormous and beautiful gold setting. The keys of the town—the wards of which represent letters in massive gold,—

“DIOS ABRIRA,
EL REY ENTRERA,”

are here shown.

Some of the relics are one mass of precious stones, with gold and silver in profusion. They were extremely dirty, because the parsimony of the church fears to lose an atom of their value by cleaning them. A stupendous temple of silver, twelve feet high, attracts attention from its extraordinary workmanship and size. This is only used on grand occasions for carrying The Host through the Cathedral and town on fête days.

Many other memorable things and objects

of value were shown. But the Duke's party felt tired, and agreed to visit the Cathedral again, to see the rest of its peculiar beauties.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE FUGITIVES.

ON the top of one of the hills that rise from the banks of the Guadalquivir stands the Convent of San Juan de Alfarache. A small valley, through which a mule-path descends sharply and ruggedly, separates the height upon which the convent is built from a corresponding elevation. From the brow of this second hill a very striking view is obtained. On one side a wood of stunted ilex, interspersed with that oriental-looking shrub, the aloe, carries the eye to a rich

slope of the greenest moss ; while the bright red mantle of some wayfarer, and the trappings of his mule, give contrast and force of colour to the foreground. It is a scene which both the Boths would have revelled in depicting.

Beneath, approached by a soft plain, flows the shining Guadalquivir. Sweet, indeed, is the air that pervades that lovely spot. The very name of the Guadalquivir,* unconnected with the harmonious landscape around, is sufficient to make the heart of a traveller *quiver* with delight.

Gliding on, gracefully and silently, winds the river to the foot of Seville's towers. A glorious sunset is reflecting on the horizon the mighty Giralda, which rises, like some vast giant, among its humble, but not ungraceful, neighbours.†

* The sonorous name of this river, though a corruption, is an improvement on the old Moorish appellation, *Wady al Kebir* (the great river).

† The Giralda, a lofty square tower of Moorish architecture, which originally formed part of the ancient mosque, serves now as a belfry to the cathedral. It was built about 1196. It terminates in a little cupola, whereon,

The distant mountains have not yet lost the snow on their summits, which, tinged with the roseate hue of the setting sun, adds an additional charm to the already glorious prospect.

No sound is in the air, save occasionally the plaintive chant of a solitary muleteer, or the bleating of a mountain goat. The scene is almost solemn. Such is the effect of nature's beauties on the contemplative soul. The air is

stands the *Giralda*, which gives its name to the tower. This figure is a brazen statue of Faith, executed by Bartolome Morel, which, though weighing two tons and a half, turns with the slightest breeze, thus acting as a gigantic weathercock—a somewhat strange employment for Faith. In “Don Quixote,” the Knight of the Wood tells the Knight of La Mancha that, by the particular injunction of “the peerless Casildea de Vandalia, he challenged that famous giantess, La Giralda of Seville, who is as strong and undaunted as one that is made of brass, and who, without changing place, is the most changeable and inconstant woman in the world.” To this he adds, “I came, I saw, and overcame: I made her stand still, and fixed her in a constant point for the space of a whole week.” Then, with an amusing appearance of unconsciousness, he goes on to say—“*No wind having blown in the skies during all that time but the north.*”

soft—even voluptuous ; and it tempts the gazer to muse on Spanish beauty, as revealed not alone in landscapes, but in the attractions of Andalusian women.

The magnificence, no less than the sweetness, of the view, is great. On a knoll above the convent, the perfume of oleanders, mingled with that of overpowering orange-blossoms, steeps the air in balm, and flatters still more the already enraptured senses.

But to a couple who were meandering over this rugged pathway, the splendour of the scene appeared to pass unheeded. A tall and handsome man, and a trembling woman, supported by his arm, were ascending the hill. On gaining the summit they paused for a while, and gazed anxiously across the country they had just traversed, as if fearing pursuit. But no human figures could be descried by them ; and the fugitives were the only intruders on the solitude and silence of nature.

The woman was dressed in dark-grey coloured silk ; and on her head was thrown a mantilla. The costume of the man was totally hidden by a Spanish cloak. A sombrero completed his attire. Nothing in their appearance was in discord with the present scenery.

At length the female voice was heard—

“ You may deceive me,” said she ; “ or, perhaps, you may yourself be deceived as to the depth of your feelings towards me. We had better return.”

“ How often, my beloved,” replied the man, “ have you promised never more to distress yourself and me with these vain fears ? I fondly hoped you understood the nature of my feelings and the depth of my attachment, and that all vain regrets on your part had, long ago, been smothered. You have sacrificed much to me, and I am prepared to make every worldly atonement in my power. For the rest, you will find that I shall return the affection you have lavished

on me, and never swerve in my fidelity to so devoted a heart."

These hurried and specious words calmed Clara Leicester, for she it was. But their effect did not long endure. Fears, self-reproaches, throes of conscience, and a foresight of all the hideous train of consequences which must result from her act, again agitated her beyond endurance. The past could not, indeed, be recalled, though it was still in her power to mitigate, in some degree, the punishment that awaited her. Repentance, at this stage of her offence, might have changed scorn into pity—a great gain. Had she, even at that "eleventh hour," resisted the persuasions of her selfish and profligate seducer, and refused to fly with him from friends and kindred, she would have demonstrated to them that some principles—some faint relics of honour still dwelt in her breast, and that she had not taken her place among the utterly lost and abandoned. She could not hope to see her

children again; yet, had she now paused in her career, their feelings towards her, as they grew up, would have been not those of anger, but sorrow, leading, perhaps, to eventual reconciliation and renewed love.

Whether Mrs. Leicester thus meditated or not, cannot be known, though it is certain that she continued to remonstrate with her companion against the course they had commenced. He, however, did not fail to perceive that her words came more from her lips than from her heart. His design was, accordingly, unshaken.

But what language can adequately stigmatise Tresham's conduct? Even had his intentions been in reality such as (with a lie in his mouth) he succeeded in making Mrs. Leicester believe them to be, he knew he was not only condemning *her* to misery and the world's scorn, but blasting the prospects of another loving and trusting woman to whom he was betrothed, and

who was all virtue and generosity. Reckless, selfish, and remorseless, he overruled Mrs. Leicester's wish to return to her sister, the Duchess, and cared nothing for the sufferings into which he destined her ultimately to be plunged. He never contemplated reparation or any kind ; otherwise he would have looked forward to a measure, which, as far as circumstances permitted, might have vindicated his character as a human being. He should have waited till a divorce had been obtained by the husband, and then married the discarded wife.

Love is a powerful reasoner ; and at length the intense delight of accompanying Tresham dispelled Clara's fears, and overcame her hesitation. *Her* feelings towards *him* were precisely the reverse of *his* towards *her*.

They both strove for present happiness ; but how different were the sacrifices made by Clara Leicester, to any which could be demanded of Tresham ! She, to fly, must lose

her position in society for ever. Nevertheless, the inducement long held out to her, was so fascinating, that she was powerless to resist, and strong in determining to sacrifice duty, future peace, and conscience.

He, on the other hand, had already resolved upon not fulfilling his engagements to her. According to his reasoning, it was totally impossible to give up the only means he now had to retrieve his tarnished character, and pay his debts, which nothing but a marriage with the heiress of Clementsford could effect. He had thus foredoomed Mrs. Leicester to degradation and want, whenever it should be inconvenient to him any longer to protect her.

The Duke of Ellingfield had discovered the *liaison* between his guests ; and, in a kind and delicate manner, remonstrated with Lord Sidney upon the imprudence of his travelling any longer with a person whose character was in such jeopardy as Mrs. Leicester's. In the

mildest manner, his Grace explained to Tresham the delicate position of all parties ; and 'demonstrated the misery which would fall on the Duchess and all her family, were an *exposé* provoked by a persistence in so flagrant an intimacy.

Tresham saw plainly the wisdom of the advice, and promised to attend to it. He determined, he said, to leave Spain for England, almost immediately ; and such, indeed, was his intention. But, previously to his departure, he had an interview with Mrs. Leicester, under the pretence of bidding her farewell ; and, whether from previous design, or sudden temptation, he proposed to Clara to become the partner of his flight.

True, she at first resisted ; and with a sincerity in her manner, that argued better things. Nevertheless, the meeting ended in her agreeing to leave Seville almost simultaneously with Tresham.

The fugitives travelled by land to San Lucar, a quiet seaport town, at the mouth of the Guadalquivir, between Seville and Cadiz; from which place they proceeded to Xeres, and thence to Cadiz, where they embarked for England.

CHAPTER XVII.

A SPANISH DINNER-PARTY. THE ITALIAN OPERA
AT SEVILLE. A GIPSEY DANCE.

THE autumn was fast approaching, and the Duke was anxious to return to England. Her Grace's health was much improved, and they had been from home nearly two years. Much, however, was still to be seen in and about Seville; and, as a Spanish dinner-party had been planned for them, their hosts came to fetch the English guests at the appointed hour.

It took some time to reach the house, which was situated at the end of the town, in the Calle Donna Maria de Dolores.

The party was ushered through a cool and delightful *Patio*, with a fountain in the centre. On arriving within the house, a handsome marble staircase brought them to the upper story, all the apartments of which opened into a square gallery.

The reception-room was of good size, furnished, according to English ideas, with superlatively bad taste, chairs being uncomfortably placed round the room, with their backs touching the wall, and at close order, in a most formal style. A crimson velvet sofa, as hard as iron, and stools covered with the same rich material, were primly ranged, as if in preparation for some spectacle. A few gay French prints, in gorgeous frames, decorated the walls.

In all Spanish houses, the same number of

chairs is remarked—a testimony to the hospitality of the owners.

After placing the party upon the seats of honour, and informing them that the house was at their disposition, the conversation commenced. At first it was constrained and uncomfortable, owing to the difficulty arising from neither party speaking the other's language fluently. Two of the Spaniards, however, luckily spoke French, and interpreted. One of them proposed that the gentlemen should visit the stables to see the horses and Spanish saddlery, which is usually very rich and handsome. This relieved them from their state seats or the red sofa, with their feet on the red stools.

The host was reckoned a great jockey, being the owner of three horses, a one-horse calèche, and another vehicle. The saddles and bridles were curious and richly wrought. He led out each of his horses separately; and they all manifested great fear in presence of a steed, which to the English

appeared as quiet as a lamb. But it does not do to be too cynical with foreigners on these points.

Having minutely examined the out-of-door property, our party returned to the drawing-room.

Dinner was at last announced, and the company entered the dining room. Here another difficulty presented itself in the presence of Donna Maria, the host's sister, and another lady his wife. The latter was a short, stout lady, of uncertain age, with a decidedly thick beard on her chin ; her complexion was sallow, and her eyes most pertinaciously regarded each other. Her nose appeared to have a taste for astronomy, so celestial was its tendency. Donna Anna had been a rich heiress ; a fact which no doubt had some weight when her gay and handsome husband selected her from the fair Sevillañas for his partner.

His sister had beauteous eyes and the whitest of teeth.

Slices of orange commenced the repast ; then came wine and olives, succeeded by soup.

The table was crowded with handsome plate and an infinity of dishes, handed round in quick succession ; each of which the guests were expected to partake of.

Donna Anna's thoughts never wandered from the table. A "*si*," or "*no*," was all the reply she vouchsafed to any question, and she arranged and settled every dish as it appeared.

The English afforded much merriment. Every sentence they uttered elicited a laugh. One of the Spaniards seemed to think sufficient wine had not been offered ; but another's reply set all to rights.—“ You have given them,” said he, “ enough to eat ; and that, with the English, is the great compliment ” (*gran complimento*). A laugh followed this truth. Eighty dishes, at least, must have been handed round.

The wine was very good, and Donna Anna partook not a little of it. Her conversation increased in proportion. Greville asked her if she played the guitar ?

"No," replied she, taking a toothpick from a richly-carved gold and silver Indian case. "No; the guitar is low."

"Do you smoke?"

"No. That, also, is low."

"Which do you prefer—the opera or the bull-fight?"

"Mi gusto la opera mucho; pero los toros muchissimo."

Donna Maria, on the other hand, did not like bull-fights. Indeed, it is not now the fashion, among the upper classes, for the ladies to own to a taste for the ring.*

A "bifsteack" completed the dinner. This was some meat cut up into small pieces, half an

* Nevertheless, at Seville, the author was greatly shocked at the cruel remark of a lady who, when a poor horse, dragging his entrails on the ground, passed her, exclaimed "*Mira que bella faja!*" The author's feelings, on hearing this, were especially outraged, because the lady had travelled with him and his party in the boat from Cadiz, and charmed them by singing many airs on deck with a voice inexpressibly melodious and feminine.

inch square. Cigars were then produced, the smoke of which was puffed full in the face of the ladies, to their apparent delectation.

The conversation was scant. At last there was a move. Donna Maria conducted the party to the balcony, when a visit to the Opera was proposed, and joyously assented to. Donna Anna remained in the parlour, to cupboard her treasures. Before leaving the house, a mutual interchange of cards took place.

Thus ended the feast of the ninety-and-six dishes.

The company now proceeded direct to the Opera-house, the interior of which is painted in the Moorish style, after the manner of the decorations in the Alcazar. The arrangement of the boxes is the same as in most Italian theatres, and the pit is divided into numbered stalls, which prevents that coarse scrambling for seats enacted in London, where ladies scream and faint, and men run the risk of entering "*sans culotte*"—

if, indeed, the Cerberus of her Majesty's theatre approves of the shade of those articles.

The arrangement of every foreign theatre, both as to comfort and economy, is preferable to the London Opera-houses, where the "*parvenu*" exquisites, and exclusive young ladies, imagine they are earning immortal musical fame by paying exorbitant sums, and accusing Grisi of being too fat for her *rôle*.

The opera performed was *Belisario*—the part of Irene by Señora Villo, a Spanish prima donna, whose beauty of person surpassed her vocal merits. But the whole of the dresses, minor parts, and *mise en scene*, were exquisite, at the cost of only a trifling outlay.

The moon was throwing its varied lights on the picturesque streets of Seville, as the Duchess returned to the *Fonda della Reina*.

Next day, at two o'clock, the English party proceeded once more to the cathedral, to witness the exposition of the remains of San Ferdinand.

A golden coffin, with one side of glass, so that the spectators could see within, was placed upon a raised platform in the royal chapel, the richness of which could hardly be surpassed. The procession commenced with a number of priests, who proceeded to a side chapel, and blessed the water placed there for christening. An imitation of thunder then took place, effected by fireworks, which surrounded the galleries.

Troops were now seen, with the band playing the royal march. They entered the Capilla Real, to which all the people flocked. The soldiers presented arms to the body whilst the coffin was being covered, after which the people left the cathedral. The magnificent organ pealed forth its strains, adding an impressive grandeur to the whole scene. The Giralda was also visited. The word "FORTISSIMA" is written at the top, and can be distinctly read from the ground, although at a height of nearly four hundred feet. The ascent to the summit was too

fatiguing, though attained by a series of inclined planes ; but there is a fine view from a gallery some way up.

The Seville bull-ring deserved inspection. It is a more picturesque building than the one at Ronda, although not yet quite completed. The seats are uncomfortable, being stone benches, without backs. The ladies here, for the most part, wore bonnets, in place of the graceful mantilla ; and the Majo dresses are fewer than at Ronda.

A gipsy dance was the entertainment provided this evening. The performers were the same set as had been seen in Ronda.

By those who have witnessed the "*pas de caractère*" executed by Taglioni, Ellsler, or Cerrito, a sense of disgust must be felt when they see, for the first time, the true Gitana. Light airy muslin, or spangled gauze, form no part of their attire ; neither was their hair well arranged—a grace in which few Spanish women are deficient. So uncouth and wild a set as the four-

teen females assembled within these walls, could seldom be witnessed. These were the performers : the men and old women sat round the room. Their toilettes were composed of the coarsest and gaudiest calicoes ; and the only article of value worn by them—if we omit the questionable jewellery so flauntily displayed—was a silk apron, which, on this occasion, decorated the person of every gipsey girl.

It was surmised that a caravan of French aprons had been plundered ; so much out of character was this part of the gipsey dress with the rest of their dowds. Nor must the broad sandals of their shoes escape notice.

The only graceful part in the performance of these gipsies, was their use of the charming castanet. A plainer set of faces could never have been brought together, and they all had the wild eagle eye of their wandering race. The men were wilder still, which, in them, constituted their chief attraction. They looked like swarthy brigands.

If the women's faces were not alluring, still less so was their dancing, of which the chief characteristics were yells and jumps. A couple of these amazons stood opposite one another in different attitudes, and then the guitar struck up a fandango, while the men and old women clapped their hands by way of accompaniment.

The monotony of the music, dancing, and screeching was painful. Indeed, to see these vagrants to advantage, it is necessary to ply them with sweet wine and "dulces," to which they are very partial, or else you must talk to them in their gipsey dialect ; and then, it is said, there is nothing they will not do.

On the whole, the effect of the gipsey-dance was anything but pleasing as an exhibition, and vastly inferior to that of the Spanish dancers' soirée. Still it was not utterly barren of interest, being peculiar in its character.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A SPANISH MANSION—MURILLO'S GALLERY—
SEVILLIAN STEAMBOAT—APPROACH TO CADIZ
—INTERIOR OF THE CITY.

WE must now return to our English friends. It may easily be imagined that when the flight of Mrs. Leicester was discovered, the presence of Greville added considerably to the embarrassment of the Duke and Duchess. Indeed, he himself was not slow in perceiving the circumstance; and an opportunity being soon afforded for him to mention that his presence was re-

quired at Gibraltar, he left his companions with many regrets. The Duke extracted a promise from him, that when he should go to England he would visit them.

Greville returned, as he had come, by Ronda. He preferred travelling on horseback through the grand and wild mountain scenery ; and perhaps Ronda had more attractions for him than he cared to avow.

Upon his arrival at that town, he did not fail to present himself at the house of the Marchesa di Salvaltierra. It was one of the oldest buildings in Ronda, and its exterior had somewhat the appearance of feudal magnificence.

A lofty *porte-cochère*, surmounted by a carved mass of shields and arms, conducted into the patio or square-yard, which was converted into a kind of garden, in the midst of which played a small fountain.

The house stair-case was of oak, giving an ancient and handsome effect to the rest . of

the building. A few pictures hung on the walls.

Having ascended the stairs, and crossed a small hall, the library—a spacious apartment—was entered. The sides of this room were lined with many choice volumes, among which were conspicuous the works of Cervantes, Lope de Vega, Calderon, Garcilasso, George of Montemayor, Feliciano de Sylva, Aleman, Mendoza, Juan de Mena, and other luminaries of old Spanish literature.

A striking and characteristic view might be descried from the windows. Beneath was a narrow street, with a church and tower, over which, but far beyond, rose the Ronda range of mountains. An air of departed grandeur was perceptible in every portion of the house. All that was old was solid and handsome; but the modern furniture was of an ordinary description.

The ladies were assembled in the library. They appeared surprised and gratified to set

Greville, and asked numerous questions concerning the Duke and Duchess, to which he replied by informing them that his friends were about to return to England.

Conscia was as bright and fascinating as ever ; and Greville passed a happy day in the house of the Marchesa.

The following morning he proceeded to Gibraltar.

Little now remained to be visited by the English party at Seville ; and accordingly the time was fixed for their homeward journey. On the day of Greville's departure, the Duke and his friends inspected Murillo's gallery, where, in a particular chamber designated " Murillo's Room," may be seen paintings which exhibit his three different styles. Among the numerous subjects in the gallery is a San Joseph and Child, by Stephano Marcus, pupil of Murillo ; and a fine picture it is ; so fine, indeed, as to be attributed by some to the Maestro himself.

Murillo is deservedly venerated by his countrymen, and adored even by the peasantry. All his women and children are copies of his wife and family. Some connoisseurs, indeed, maintain the contrary as regards the wife, because, though rich and noble, she was not beautiful ; at least no mention is made of her personal attractions.

M. Baillé made a great parade in conducting the party to the steamboat, where he had prepared a kind of homage or farewell serenade of guitars. Tears were in the eyes of the guide as he bade the voyagers a last adieu.

The steamer glided past the lovely Alameda, or public walk, extending nearly three miles on the banks of the Guadalquivir ; and the groves of citron and olive appeared (because seen for the last time) more bewitching than ever. The hill and village of San Juan de Alfarache now showed itself with its ruined convent, crowning the picturesque view.

Could the Duchess have known of the incident that had taken place there so lately, in which passion triumphed over principle—an incident destined to lead to the misery and ruin of her only sister—she doubtless would have contemplated the scene with a deeper interest than the beauty of the place alone excited.

The banks of the river after this point are very tame. Sometimes large herds of bulls might be seen grazing peacefully on the extensive meadows that reach to the muddy stream—doubtless, ere long, destined for the ring.

A very old-fashioned coach, with four mules fantastically caparisoned, brought on board the steamer an elderly couple, who appeared, judging from their proud demeanour, to be grandees of the first class. Not deigning even to cast a single glance at their fellow-passengers, they sulkily shut themselves up in a private cabin. How supremely foolish is class pride! Those who manifest it, have, at best, only an uneasy pleasure

The steamer itself was comfortable, and decorated with views of Seville, painted around the cabin. The vessel was built in that town ; but she is worked by English engineers.

The Guadalquivir is one of the most serpentine rivers in the world. After describing many circles, the vessel appeared to have made no advancement at all.

The approach to Cadiz atones for all. Perhaps no other town, if we except Constantinople, exceeds in beauty this city, as viewed from the sea. The dazzling whiteness of the houses, "like a city built of ivory," the innumerable towers and steeples, and the lofty cathedral, give it an oriental appearance. The bay (one of the finest in the world) is crowded with ships and boats ; on the bows of which an eye is painted. Nothing can surpass the life and brilliancy of the scene.

The proceedings at the custom-house tax the patience and irritate the temper of travellers. Unless a stranger should bribe the officials, his

trunks are ransacked, and their contents recklessly thrown about. Let all prudent passengers avoid such an occurrence by a timely *douceur*.

After passing through the gates of this strongly-fortified town, you enter the streets, with their lofty houses, and bright green balconies filled with flowers. The many-coloured curtains, outside the windows, floating on the light breeze, give a gay appearance, and remind one forcibly of Malta.

The loveliness of Cadiz is transporting—everything that meets the eye appears to be stainless. Even the ground one treads on is as clean as the glittering palaces passed at almost every step. The streets are mostly built at right angles; and they are narrow, in order to afford shade in summer. The variety of colours—the balconies, upon which may occasionally be seen a *señorita* playing carelessly with her fan, or plucking a carnation to place in her raven tresses—impart to the city an oriental tinge.

which adds considerably to the beauty and seeming mystery of the *coup d'œil*.

The Plaza del General Mina is striking ; and the Calle Ancha, as its name denotes, is a broad street, well paved, and having good shops on either side—especially those delightful glove shops, reminding one of Paris.

The Opera is worth a visit. The building is very large, and much superior to the one at Seville. It is also tastefully decorated. The lyrical drama performed during the short sojourn of our tourists, was Persiani's "Inez de Castro." This contains some very effective music. The composer's charming wife toiled through her part, on the first performance of the work, to make it popular ; and the great talents of so accomplished a vocalist could not fail to succeed. But she could not play in it for ever, and everywhere ; therefore, it is now almost forgotten.

A ball was to be undergone after the opera. The witching glances of the señoritas, and the

admirable pictures on the walls of the ball-room, gave lustre to the festivity. But the fair ones excel more in the promenade than in the dance.

The cathedral of Cadiz is a noble building ; and from the top of the tower, a picturesque view of the town and sea is obtained. The tops of the houses in this town are flat, and white-washed. They are usually crowned with a minaret, which gives the city a magnificent appearance from the sea.

Cadiz, unlike Seville, is a place of enjoyment. The latter is more valued for its antiquities and reminiscences, than for any gay attraction. On the contrary, at Cadiz,* the visitor can find balls, operas, casinos, and endless gaiety ; but there is little to see in it, besides picturesque effects. One of the convents is enriched by some exquisite pictures.

Puerta di Santa Maria is renowned for its

* Clubs.

bull-fights. This town is situated exactly opposite to Cadiz. Our hospitable consul there must not be passed over without one remark of gratitude for his unfailing attention to his countrymen.

CHAPTER XIX.

INTERVIEW BETWEEN LADY GRACE AND
TRESHAM.

LET us now change the scene to England.

We often bear with patience the severest misery, when we are conscious either that we are wronged, or that our motives are misinterpreted by the hard-hearted, cold, and censorious world; and we combat the reproaches, and endure the sneers, of our enemies, as long as our conscience does not rebuke us. But the contempt of those we love, expressed before us, is indeed a bitter infliction. The mortification our

pride sustains, in imagining that we have lavished our affections unworthily, is beyond the utmost power of human endurance.

And thus it was with Lady Grace. In bestowing her heart on Tresham, she had imagined—so prone are the best of us to self-flattery—that her acute discernment had caused her to recognise his superiority over the men she had hitherto met; and this estimation of his character was further influenced by a vague idea, that her own qualities were reflected in him.

Alas, how acutely she now felt her imprudence, in yielding to a passion for one whose fascinating exterior, and plausible manners, had alone originated it! Her misery accrued from a double cause. She had been deceived, not only by her lover, but by her female friend and relation, and by them conjointly. What she dreaded, had really come to pass—what she had feared to anticipate, was now actually going on—the fatal presentiment she so long had enter-

tained, but which never assumed any other aspect than that of a vague, dark dream, had become a stern truth. She was bowed down by the weight of her woe—prostrated both in mind and health.

But the very pride which made her at first so grievously mourn her loss, and lament over her misplaced affections, now came to her assistance. Should she—a young, beautiful, and wealthy heiress—deplore the treachery of one admirer? Should she pine and wear herself out by the morbid imaginings of a betrayed heart? Should she pass the remainder of her life in vain lamentation for one who had proved himself so totally unworthy of the love she had unhesitatingly lavished on him? No! She would endeavour to take her position among the good, the joyful, and the admired, and appear unconcerned by the offences of her erring cousin; for, respecting her lover, she had nothing to conceal. Her engagement to him was unknown to all but herself and the offender.

These, indeed, were her resolves, but they were not carried into effect.

The very first newspaper she took up contained an account of the *liaison* between Clara and Lord Sidney Tresham.

To know that Clara Leicester, her friend and cousin, was outraging every principle in residing publicly with an unmarried man, and that man Grace's own affianced husband, was too dreadful to contemplate without distraction. Yet in all her anguish, Grace never entertained one unkind feeling towards Clara. Lady Grace was, indeed, an exception to the general rule. Accustomed to see about her nothing but worldliness, and to be perpetually listening to the intrigues of her mother for her own marriage, she still remained unpolluted. The same warm and generous heart, the same devoted and unchanging affection, the same disinterestedness remained in her as ever.

Nevertheless, it must not be supposed that she openly forgave Mrs. Leicester; and when

Clara, now in London, wrote to her soliciting a visit in imploring terms, assuring Grace that she had something of importance to reveal, and that she would secure her against the chance of meeting Lord Sidney, or that her visit should ever become known to him, Lady Grace decisively, but mildly, refused.

Had Mrs. Leicester been aware of the position in which Lady Grace and Tresham were placed with regard to each other, she would have been less surprised at her cousin's refusal to see her ; but, fortunately for herself, she was ignorant of their engagement, and was thus saved from many pangs.

As soon as the numerous requirements of the law could be satisfied, Mr. Leicester succeeded in obtaining a divorce *a vinculo matrimonii*, and was not long in taking to himself another wife. Every track of the guilty lovers was lost to Lady Grace. With great anxiety, arising from conflicting emotions, she read daily

the list of marriages in all the newspapers, almost hoping to see an announcement of the lawful union of her cousin Clara and Lord Sidney. In this hope she was disappointed.

Grace was now gradually recovering her accustomed calm, when an accident occurred which threw her once more into her late grief and perplexity. It was her daily habit to drive short distances from town early in the morning, and to leave the carriage and walk, whenever a retired spot should seem favourable for such exercise. To one place, in particular, near Kew Bridge, she was very partial. The pleasant associations of the neighbourhood, its serenity, its quiet green, its memories of Thomson, the poet of "The Seasons," who at one time lived in Kew Lane, where he became acquainted with the "Amanda" often celebrated in his verses—its royal gardens, bosomed in noble trees,

"Whose turf, whose shade, whose flowers among,
Wanders the hoary Thames along
His silver-winding way,"—

all these tranquil influences soothed the heart of Lady Grace, and tended to heal the wound inflicted on it by Tresham.

In this locality she had occasionally remarked a dark, claret-coloured cab standing near a cottage by the road. No crest was on the harness, and the "tiger's" dress was black. What caused her to pay more than ordinary attention to this circumstance was, that one day as her carriage passed, she observed a gentleman at the door of the cottage, who, as if fearing to be seen, retreated in a hurried manner into the house. This, however, might not have attracted much notice, had it not been immediately followed by the appearance, at the window of an upper room, of a female face, partly hidden by the curtain, but gazing furtively and anxiously at her (Lady Grace's) equipage. That something mysterious was going on, was evident.

Shortly afterwards, when again taking her usual drive, Grace was startled by the horses in

her own carriage being suddenly pulled up. On putting her head out of the window to ascertain the cause, she perceived it was occasioned by the cab before noticed, which turned when in the act of passing, and after obstructing her progress, drove on furiously before her.

Curiosity and surprise, to say nothing of the momentary alarm arising from what might almost be called a collision, induced Grace, on her return home, to question one of her footmen as to the occurrence; and his explanation was most embarrassing to her.

“Why, my lady,” said the man, “people say the cottage has been taken by a French actress from London, who has gone out there to recover her health after working too hard last season. But I don’t know the owner of the cab, though I shouldn’t wonder if he knew your Ladyship; because, my Lady, his servant asked me, this very day, to carry this letter to your Ladyship. At first I told him I would have

nothing to do with it. But he wasn't content to take 'No' for an answer ; so, in a manner, I was obliged to take charge of the letter."

Lady Grace now interrupted the footman's loquacity, by desiring him to leave the note on the table, and quit the apartment.

A suspicion, amounting almost to certainty, as to the writer of this note, drove the colour from the lips and cheeks of Grace. She scarcely dared to rise from her seat, and for many minutes she could not recover her self-possession sufficiently to advance to the table and look at the superscription ; on seeing which, the blood rushed to her temples and fled again every moment. She trembled with excitement. The dear writing she once had prized beyond every other, now agitated her with intolerable anguish.

But Grace was alone with her heart ; and although she had to endure many, many struggles against her pride, outraged unmercifully by the man whom she had loved more

than any on earth, she finally broke the seal, and read as follows :—

“ If one who has forfeited all claim to the recollection—not to say regard—of Lady Grace Dalzell, might dare to address her again, he, presuming on her kindness and former affection, would solicit an interview, if only for a few minutes. Indeed, he would not have ventured to take this step had he not some important fact to disclose, which he believes will be of service to Lady Grace.

“ Waiting in painful suspense for a permission to present himself, he remains, as ever,

“ Her’s most respectfully,

“ SIDNEY.”

The feelings of Grace, arising from a perusal of this note, were of a conflicting nature. At first, indignation alone possessed her. That one who had so cruelly deceived her hopes, and

blighted her future life, should crave an interview, seemed like adding insult to injury, and was, therefore, undeserving a moment's consideration. But when she looked again at the writing, and saw the name which once caused her heart to beat with intense delight, she became undecided, and began to reflect how she should answer the appeal.

After much consideration, in which former love and mortified pride strove for mastery, her own kind heart triumphed, and she granted what Tresham sought, naming the following day for his visit. But after she had dispatched her reply, she was assailed by misgivings as to the propriety of her concession.

Grace passed a very agitated and sleepless night, watching with weary eyes the slow approach of the white dawn. She arose, nevertheless, at her usual hour, and after paying her accustomed visit to her father, in whose room she generally breakfasted, she returned to her

own chamber to compose her thoughts and recover self-possession for the approaching interview with Tresham.

Lord Clementsford's paternal eye had observed, during the meal, his daughter's pale and care-worn countenance, and he spoke to her of it. But she evaded the subject, assuring him she was well.

Now, being in the solitude of her own apartment, she pondered on her lost hopes, and on the sweet dream she had once cherished. Fruitless ruminations ! As the hour of Lord Sidney's visit drew near, she felt the necessity of banishing her weakness, and guarding herself against a return of such repinings in his presence. She even paid particular attention to her toilette ; not, however, with any vain or coquettish meaning, such as to remind him of what he had sacrificed, but rather to appear unconcerned at his past conduct, and to evince an outward indifference

not in accordance with the promptings of her heart.

As the clock struck eleven—the hour mentioned in her note—she descended to the drawing-room with all the stateliness of her mother's manner. A more beautiful and noble-looking creature could scarcely be seen than Lady Grace as she proceeded down the stairs with the firm intent of supporting her individual dignity and the character of her race, though at that very moment she felt she could not manifest the necessary reserve without a severe struggle.

She was now seated in the drawing-room, and, as she imagined, fully prepared for any trial. Wheels were at length heard approaching the house, and her sensations almost overcame her as she listened to the ringing of the gate-bell. The sound of rapid footsteps soon succeeded; the door was opened, and the name of Lord Sidney Tresham was announced by her

servant. But Grace would not at first remove her eyes from the book on which she was looking, and which she had taken up in order to seem occupied and unconcerned.

Fully aware that it was absolutely necessary she should repress her emotions and assume an appearance of composure at this painful moment, she rose from her seat and bowed to Lord Sidney, who approached and took her hand in his before she could utter the commonest words of recognition ; and it was not until she heard an inquiry as to her father's health, that she clearly comprehended what was going on. She was like one perplexed in an incongruous dream.

"My father, I grieve to say," replied she, in trembling accents, which betrayed her deep emotion, "is far from well ; and, indeed, fears are entertained about him. But, I pray you be seated, Lord Sidney."

"I thank you, Lady Grace," rejoined he.

An embarrassing pause ensued. At length, it was broken by Tresham, who said—

“I have taken the liberty of beseeching this interview, not out of any desire to afford myself pleasure, but, as I told you in my note, from a wish to make you acquainted with some intelligence which has accidentally come to my knowledge, and which I feel sure will deeply interest you.”

“I could never have supposed,” observed Lady Grace, whose voice had now regained its firmness, “that you would solicit an interview with me, unless some powerful motive respecting a third person had impelled you. Nor can you, I presume, think I would have authorized your presence in this house, had I not imagined I should hear something connected with my unhappy cousin, Mrs. ——”—and she hesitated—“Leicester.”

“You are perfectly right,” said Tresham.

“Indeed,” resumed Lady Grace, “I felt as-

sured that you would not willingly subject me to pain such as your present visit inflicts, unless you had something to confide in me about Clara. But I must request you will do this as quickly as possible, in order that our meeting may terminate." Grace paused awhile, and then, with a sudden effort, said, "Answer me one question, Lord Sidney—is Clara now your wife?"

Tresham seemed staggered by this abrupt interrogation.

"Oh, Lady Grace!" exclaimed he, "is *this* the greeting I am to receive after years of separation? Has my presence become so hateful, that you cannot tolerate the formal civility of a morning visit? I thought that so long and cruel an estrangement might have induced you to show some lenity to one who once had the happiness of being not wholly indifferent to you."

Lady Grace heaved a deep sigh, but quickly recovered herself.

“Lord Sidney Tresham,” said she, “I must not—I cannot—listen to this retrospect. I have banished from my mind for ever the subject to which you allude. Pray confine yourself to the information you promised, but have not yet given. You have not even answered the question I have just asked, and which I now repeat—are you yet married to Mrs. Leicester?”

“Can it be possible,” returned Tresham, “that you are in earnest in making such an inquiry? I am unable to imagine it. Mrs. Leicester my wife! *I* marry Clara, *your* cousin! I cannot bring myself to reply seriously to so strange a question. Are you in jest?”

“In jest, Lord Sidney?” retorted Grace; “I am little given to jesting at any time, still less at such a moment as the present. In a word, I think I am entitled to an answer before I permit the visit to be prolonged.”

Tresham, though his callous nature forbade

any approach of shame, seemed a little shaken by the firmness of Lady Grace. He felt that with *her*, evasion and sophistry were useless. The question had been plainly put, and he knew he must answer it plainly.

“I am *not* married to Mrs. Leicester,” said he.

Another pause followed this avowal, during which Tresham summoned to his aid the daring and fraudulent dexterity always at his command.

“Do you,” returned he, in an altered tone, “so far forget me as not to remember the promise we mutually made? Be assured that I fully intend to claim from you the fulfilment of that promise.”

Lady Grace instantly rose, and without even looking at her companion, proceeded towards the bell. Tresham was abashed. He saw how utterly vain was his threat. His gesture underwent a change, and his voice faltered, as he exclaimed—

“I pray, I implore, I conjure you, Lady Grace, to listen to what I am about to utter. If a single spark of affection for me ever warmed your heart, listen, for mercy’s sake, to one of the most miserable of human beings. Should you suffer me to proceed, and will hear my story, you may, perhaps, spare my heart from any further infliction.”

“And is not *mine* also to be considered?” demanded Grace. “Do you suppose I am compelled to hear a recital which cannot fail to harrow my feelings? Must my betrayed affections and injured pride be still more outraged by the recapitulation of a story I already know too well? Shall I, an unmarried woman, be insulted by details respecting the infidelity and profligacy of the man I once loved? And must he, himself, be the narrator? No! hear and remember! Your speeches now can have no effect on me, therefore spare yourself the unnecessary abasement of a confession. I already

know all; and I will not permit you to dwell on the events of the last few years. What I expected to hear, and alone desire to know, is, what has become of Mrs. Leicester?"

"Can I," interrogated Lord Sidney, evading the question, "be listening to the person who once promised to be my wife? Do you forget your plighted word that nothing you might hear against me should alter your feelings in my behalf? These recriminations, however, are not what I wished, nor is it my present desire to prolong a meeting to which you are evidently averse. I shall therefore retire, and the information I possess shall be conveyed through another channel."

Rising as he spoke, Tresham proceeded to the door, when Lady Grace, in her turn, interposed.

"Stay, Lord Sidney, stay!" ejaculated she. "I beseech you, by your memory of the love I once bore towards you, tell me what has become of Mrs. Leicester."

“She no longer bears that appellation,” coldly replied Tresham. “Mr. Leicester, who, you may have heard, has divorced her, has insisted that she should not assume his name. She is, therefore, at present known as Clara Delaunay. But—to come to the point—she is not now under my protection. In fact, for in such cases it is always best to be explicit, she is at this moment living with another man.”

This atrocious falsehood was improvised on the spot by Tresham. But, singularly enough, as will be seen by-and-by, a circumstance subsequently occurred which, had it already originated, would have given a colour of truth to the defamation now uttered, though it could not have convicted Clara of additional guilt, for the event was free from the slightest taint of profligacy.

“Impossible, Lord Sidney!” rejoined Lady Grace; “you must be mistaken. I will not believe that my unhappy cousin can have fallen

into such abandoned infamy and utter degradation as you affirm. That she, who married, not for love, but to save her parent from ruin, should, when away from home, have yielded to the art of your unprincipled persuasion, may be regarded with the eye of pity. It does not follow that her first offence, in which the heart alone was concerned, should be succeeded by mercenary dishonour. You must have been led into some grievous error."

"I regret," said Lord Sidney, "to be under the necessity of repeating my assertion. Nay, the fact is notorious. But enough of this distressing subject. And now, Lady Grace, may I entreat you to acquaint me how I am henceforth to be received? I believe—indeed, I know—you are just of age, therefore I must claim your promise to become my wife."

"Sir!—Lord Sidney Tresham!" exclaimed Grace, "is it really your wish to insult me? Can you, in my father's absence, dare to utter

such words to me? Do you not feel that your unprincipled conduct has fully absolved me of any promise—nay, even of any oath (had I made one), given under a trust which you have recklessly violated? *You* have mistaken *me*, and *I* have been deceived in *you*. In such circumstances, there is more credit in breaking a compact than in fulfilling it. No power on earth will ever induce me to become your wife. What you have told me about Clara, I do not believe. So, if one of your purposes in coming here was to abase still deeper in my estimation my already humiliated cousin, your visit, in this respect, as in the rest, has been fruitless, and I think the sooner it is finished the better for both of us.”

“ We appear to be getting very far from the real subject,” observed Tresham; “ my intelligence is yet to come. As a prelude, however, let me recal to your memory, not only your promise, but——”

Lord Sidney hesitated, for when his own personal dignity was concerned, he felt as keen a sense of shame as any man. He was about to place himself in a mortifying position; still, he had a latent idea that the words which were to follow might awaken the tenderness of Grace, and in this hope he reconciled himself to the wound his pride must suffer.

“Remember,” pursued he, “when I formerly told you I was poor,—nay, more, embarrassed, you replied that to you such a circumstance was nothing. It only made you feel how good and bountiful was Providence which had supplied you with wealth sufficient to satisfy my exigencies—the exigencies of one you loved. I well recollect your words, Lady Grace.”

“Enough! enough!” interrupted Grace; “this visit must end.”

She had again reached the door, when her steps were arrested by her companion, who once more mentioned the name of Clara.

“Remain a little longer,” said Tresham; “permit me to finish what I was about to say. I have yet to speak of Mrs. Leicester (for so let us still call her), and I will quickly conclude. She has written to me, saying she is in actual destitution.”

“Why, how can that be?” quickly retorted Lady Grace. “You are caught in your own snare! Did you not tell me a few minutes ago, that Clara had recently left you to accept the protection of another gentleman?”

Tresham was confused for an instant, but on recovering himself, said he supposed her new *friend* had left her.

“False! all false!” exclaimed Lady Grace.

“Be this as it may,” persisted Tresham, “Mrs. Leicester declares that had not want,—nay, fear of starvation,—terrified her, I was the last individual to whom she would have applied. But the fact is, I am really the worst person

she could select, as I am myself fearfully embarrassed. You already have heard it. I have barely enough to pay my daily expenses. To you, therefore, I must appeal in your cousin's behalf. To satisfy you of the truth of what I say, I will give you Clara's present address. You will *now* understand my motive in alluding to your wealth."

This was adroitly put by Tresham. The harrowing allusion to Clara's sufferings and danger instantly calmed the anger of Grace, and filled her heart with sorrowful and tender emotions. Tears were in her eyes, and her voice quivered when she said—

"Excuse me if my words have offended you. Give me, I pray you, Mrs. Leicester's address"

"It is a low place," observed he, "and very unfit to be explored by you."

Not heeding his remark, Lady Grace went to a table and wrote the direction now dictated.

When this was done, she looked gravely—almost sternly—at Tresham, saying, “I will write to you very shortly, and may, perhaps, have occasion to request you to renew your visit.”

A smile of self-congratulation passed over the face of Tresham as he heard these words. He thought nothing of the gesture which accompanied them, but, with re-awakened hopes, took his departure, observing that he should wait until he again heard from Lady Grace before making a second call.

Grace was silent ; but Tresham was too much a man of the world not to translate into his special favour even her taciturnity. Had she not, of her own accord, said she would again write to him ? Oh, how he exulted—how he chuckled to himself, on considering this testimony of a forgiving nature, for so he interpreted it.

“By heaven !” thought he, “these women will put up with anything when they take a

fancy to a man. And where can she find a second Sidney Tresham? Excellent! I shall be able, easily enough, to mould her to my wishes. Her wealth, to be sure, is the main attraction to me, though I must not by any means overlook the fact that she is a prodigiously fine woman. Altogether, the pill of matrimony will be delightfully sweetened. I shouldn't wonder if, in the end, I make a tolerably decent husband."

Consummate hypocrite! At that very moment, having recently won a few hundreds at the gaming-table, he rented a cottage near Kew Bridge, where he located an actress, for whose sake he abandoned the unfortunate and divorced Clara Delaunay, utterly callous to the misery into which he knew she would inevitably be plunged.

Scarcely had Lady Grace heard the door close, than she rang and ordered the carriage immediately, for the purpose of going to her

forsaken cousin. As the servants were all in mourning, she would be able to proceed on her errand of mercy without being betrayed by the family livery.

Considering the state of mind which Lady Grace had been in during months past, and the agitating interview just concluded with Lord Sidney Tresham, it cannot be a matter of surprise that she had found it impossible to maintain to the last the austerity of deportment which had characterized her during the greater part of the meeting. For appeals, reminiscences, and flatteries, she was prepared, and would have been able to treat them as they merited ; but the abrupt announcement of her cousin's abject destitution totally unnerved her, at the same time that it gave sudden birth in her mind to plans for the permanent relief and restoration to society of Clara. It was in connection with these that she had promised to write again to Tresham.

We are apt to imagine that persons who do not outwardly manifest their emotions, are possessed of cold hearts, and that their stoicism arises from constitutional apathy rather than from feelings too deep for display. A stern exterior often disguises a much less selfish disposition than the seemingly tender manner.

But Lady Grace was much indebted to the faults of others as correctives of any weaknesses into which she might perhaps have fallen. Accustomed to see around little else than worldliness, canting pretence, and self-idolatry, she regarded such manifestations as warnings of danger, and therefore as beacons to guide her through the perilous maze of life; while frequent self-communing threw an air of reserve over her outward manner.

But her heart was ever good, and pure, and affectionate.

Now that her visitor was gone, and she sat expecting the announcement of the carriage, her

reflections harassed her. She felt annoyed with herself for having relaxed her first severity of manner to Lord Sidney Tresham, and at having promised again to write to him. But then he knew not her motive. Had he been aware of it, he would not have seen any cause for exultation.

On every account it was a great relief to Grace when the servant announced the carriage, though she was in extreme agitation during the drive to her cousin's lodgings.

CHAPTER XX.

THE FATHER AND DAUGHTER—A SQUALID DISTRICT—LADY GRACE AND CLARA'S LANDLADY—MEETING OF THE COUSINS.

THE narrative must now make a slight retrogression.

When Mrs. Leicester left Spain with Lord Sidney Tresham, her unfortunate connection with him was likely soon to be dissolved, although she had no reason to anticipate such a termination. Waiving any thought of her

claims on his protection after the ruinous sacrifices she had made for him — considerations with which Tresham was not much troubled—he found it did not at that period suit the state of his exchequer to have double expenses, and the journey with his paramour from Seville had made him sensibly aware of his own pecuniary embarrassments. To a man of his selfish nature, it was consistent that he should bewail the additional draft on his means, which was felt with increased force on his arrival in London, where, to provide for his own individual wants, not to mention those of another also, amounted at that time almost to impossibility. He was too well known by respectable tradesmen to obtain credit, and his perplexity increased ten-fold each day. No hope was left for him but the desperate chances of the gambling-house.

Strange to say, Sir George Delaunay was the first person to welcome—start not at the word—the guilty pair on their arrival in town from the

continent. He was happy, he said, to recover his lost child ; and without alluding to the position in which he now found her, he seemed only anxious to resume the paternal protection. This was charitable and fatherly. Thank heaven ! no transgression can still the yearnings of a true parent's heart.

But, abashed and much cast down, Clara at first avoided even looking at, or speaking to, Sir George ; who, however, treated her so kindly, and with so much respect to her feelings, that she conquered the reserve arising from her shame, and threw herself, with bitter sobs, into his arms. Not a word was spoken. What, indeed, could she urge in extenuation of her conduct ?

“Calm yourself, my dear, I implore you,” said Sir George ; “your distress will break my heart. Come home with me, my darling, and all shall be forgiven and forgotten. Come.”

Clara, not yet aware that her *liaison* with

Tresham was extensively known in England, feared that her father's proposal was meant as a preparation for her return to Mr. Leicester.

"No, father," replied she, emphatically; "with the fullest sense of your affectionate kindness, I must decline to accompany you home. Nothing on earth will shake my resolution. Here I will remain, even if my so doing should lead to discovery and the disgrace attending it. Any privation—any suffering—would be preferable to a resumption of the abhorred residence with my husband, even if my conduct could be concealed from him."

This was agonizing to the afflicted father, who knelt at her feet and renewed his entreaties, though still without success. He deduced from his daughter's obstinacy that her aversion to her husband must have been conceived long before her lapse from virtue; and after some further fruitless solicitations, he ceased to press

her immediate removal from the abode wherein he found her.

It had not, however, escaped his observation, from the objects now surrounding him, that the fact of the pair living in such shabby-genteel lodgings, was a proof of their poverty. Sir George, therefore, proffered aid; but this was respectfully, though promptly, declined by Lord Sidney, who, having already determined to get rid of Clara, felt that it would be impolitic to place himself under obligation to her father.

Alas! Mrs. Leicester was doomed subsequently to inhabit much worse lodgings than those seen by Sir George; and it was in these latter that she lived when Tresham sought the interview with Lady Grace—a period to which we now return after the foregoing retrospect.

Behind the eastern side of Regent Street, is a close and tortuous congeries of courts, alleys, and narrow thoroughfares, populous enough, but seldom traversed except by those who dwell

in the immediate neighbourhood. No lack is here of cheap traders in commodities to meet the requirements of any individual whose pocket may happily boast two or three copper coins. Among such convenient chapmen may be found vendors and sellers of old shoes ; dealers in cast-off wearing-apparel ; female shopkeepers who display in their windows an assortment of flaunting caps to tempt aspiring servant-maids ; retailers who will supply a juvenile student with penny romances illustrated by pictures alternately alarming and seductive, such as *Adventures of Jack Sheppard* and *Dick Turpin*, dying speeches and confessions, awful revelations of Fate, prophetic almanacks, moving ballads at so much a yard, and other kinds of startling literature for the million. Here, also, are vendors of suspicious meat, ready dressed ; caterers of mysterious morsels for dogs and cats ; and keepers of lodging-houses, where any unambitious family of eight or ten can be nicely

accommodated in a back room, with the use, once a fortnight, of the wash-house. But, as if to make amends for the surrounding squalor, the eye is here and there attracted by Temples* towering over all, wherein, filled by fumes of incense from white-stemmed censers, ornamented by alluring decorations, resounding with strains pealing from (external) organs, and at night beaming with dazzling lustre, is shrined The Spirit worshipped with untiring devotion by every denizen of the district. Verily, they are a reverential people.

In a somewhat retired corner of this region, is a row of small houses forming one side of a

*. And these Temples, be it known to the disgrace of our Government, are tolerated, if not patronized by it, in order to increase the revenue. As if, in a country like ours, such an awful means of lowering the national character should not be suppressed at any sacrifice. Instead of this, one is told that the abuse is very difficult to remedy. The Government admits it to be an evil, but they affirm that it is a necessary evil, thus making us a lasting reproach in the estimation of foreigners.

narrow road-way, and having opposite to them the backs of a long range of work-shops rising to about double the height of the dwelling-houses, over which they seem to domineer. Drummond, the old poet, in making a simile, says—

“ Like marigold, of sun
Deprived, that dies by shadow of some mountain ;”

so the diminutive houses in question seem to languish beneath the everlasting umbrage of the tall and uncouth-looking manufactories over against them. The end of the row is closed, and the nook is altogether a doleful one ; but it is abundantly tenanted.

It was in this place of perpetual shadow that poor deserted Clara Delaunay found a dismal refuge. Lady Grace's carriage drew up at the number indicated by Tresham. The street-door stood wide open, but several bell-handles were at both the sides, perplexing the footman. At

length, he seized the knocker and plied it so formidably that the crazy stairs seemed suddenly animated, for numerous heads were projected from every landing-place, while faces peered curiously up the kitchen steps, and eyes were seen gazing from the patched windows of the opposite work-shops. Such a sound had probably never before been heard in that dreary row. At the same moment issued from the parlour a tall, bulky woman, with a portentous visage and bullying attitude.

“What do you want here, my man?” demanded she. “You’ve made a mistake, I’m thinking; or, may-be, you’re larking. How dare you kick up such a row at a respectable person’s door?”

“You had better ask my mistress,” replied the servant; “she is in the carriage.”

“I sha’n’t go to the carriage,” rejoined the woman. “Do you think I’ll stand there to be laughed at by old mother Wilkins and all her

daughters, and all the rest of the neighbours, and all the men in all them workshops t'other side the way? No, no, my man. I ain't a fool, and I don't like no joking. If your missis wants me, tell her to come into my parlour; it's quite clean, so she needn't be afeard. Why, bless you, I'm the landlady of the house!"

The footman went to Lady Grace, and told her what the woman had said.

Grace hesitated awhile, and could scarcely overcome her repugnance. At length, the misery and destitution of her cousin rushed on her mind with ten-fold force by this contact with an abode which, to her, was so strange and forbidding. "If," thought she, "Clara, who was born a lady and nurtured like one, can *live* here, surely I may *enter* the house."

Then, speaking to the footman, she said,—
"Let down the steps. I will go in and see this woman. Send the carriage into Regent Street;

but you must remain here in the passage, in case I should call you."

When Lady Grace entered the parlour, the landlady did not rise from her chair, but remained, as it were, enthroned, waiting the receipt of intelligence. A chronic closeness of atmosphere pervaded the room, which was crowded with miscellaneous furniture. A table occupied the centre; a tent-bedstead was in one corner—a wash-tub in another—and more than one chest of drawers stood against the walls, on which hung viciously-coloured prints of soldiers returning to their sweethearts after campaigns, and sailors ditto after long cruizes. The space under the ceiling was intersected with clothes-lines, on which dangled some interesting and mysterious specimens of female attire; while, to improve the general effect, two or three unfortunate rabbits came from beneath the bedstead and the table, and moved with uncouth jumps about the floor. The wretched creatures were

not only reared in the apartment, but destined to be killed, cooked, and devoured in it.

Grace shuddered as she looked at the grotesque scene around her. But, not forgetting the sacred purpose of her visit, and with a strong effort, recovering from her disgust, she asked the woman if a lady of the name of Leicester lived there.

“No,” replied the other; “I’ve no *ladies* in *my* house. I’m a respectable person, I’d have you to know; and I scorn to harbour *ladies*.”

Grace knew not what was meant by what was said. There could, however, be no doubt that she had given offence. So, wishing to mollify the owner of the house, she said—

“My good woman, I——”

But the landlady cut her short, by retorting, “Good woman, indeed! I’m no more a good woman than you. Anybody can drive about in a carriage, leastways if they can hire one. What right have you to sport Lady Grand, and call me

‘good woman,’ eh ? My name’s Ribble. I’m a widow-woman ; and,” added she, drawing herself up with an air of consequence, “I rents this house, and lets it out in lodgings.”

“Well, Mrs. Ribble,” resumed Grace, “I was about to say that nothing could be farther from my intention in coming to your house, than to give you the least offence. I am in search of a person of the name of Leicester, or Delaunay, and I have been informed that she lives here. Are you sure you have no such individual in your house ?”

“I am,” replied Mrs. Ribble. “But, Lord ! people now-a-days, goes by all manner of names—one in one place, and another in another, and so on time without end. Ah, these is queer times ! Howsomever, as you seem to be a civil-spoken gentlewoman, and a little in trouble about this person you’re a’ searching for, I’ll just tell you the names of all my lodgers. First, there’s the front kitchen : well, Mr. Jones and his wife

and four children lives there. Then, the back kitchen is let to Mrs. Cox, who takes in washing and hangs out every thing she has on one side of the yard, which it is a good drying-ground. The back-parlour is took by Ned Baxter, the singer—him as does the comic line at the Dog-and-Duck concerts. He's a nice young man, is Ned Baxter. In the one-pair front is a family of the name of——”

Lady Grace here interrupted Mrs. Ribble, by saying, “ You are very good to give me all this information ; though, perhaps, I may save you some trouble by reminding you that I do not seek any man or any family. The object of my inquiry is a single woman, who is not, as I believe, engaged in any occupation. If you have no one answering that description, I will take my leave, with many thanks for the trouble you have taken to oblige me.”

“ Stay,” said the landlady. “ There's a single woman in the two-pair back, which I've been

obligated to furnish it for her, as she hadn't a stick of her own. In course, this makes a difference in the rent."

"What is her name?" eagerly asked Lady Grace.

"Sidney," replied Mrs. Ribble.

Grace mused for a minute, and then thinking it not unlikely that Clara, reluctant to bring disgrace on her father's name, might assume one of the names of her betrayer, asked the landlady if she might go up and see her.

"I'd better call her down," observed Mrs. Ribble ; and, mounting the first flight of stairs, she vociferated in a parrot-like scream, "Two-pair back, you're wanted."

No answer being returned to this summons, Mrs. Ribble continued her ascent until she arrived at Mrs. Sidney's door, which she opened.

The room was empty.

"She's not at home," said the landlady, re-entering the parlour.

“Could I not stay still she comes in?” timidly asked Lady Grace.

“To be sure you can,” returned the other, “leastways if she comes in afore night. Poor Mrs. Sidney! She is—I wont say grumpy—but mopish-like, sometimes a’most crying her very eyes out of her head. I shouldn’t wonder if she has been ill-used by somebody; and I’m afraid that, once in a way, she wants vittals. When I see that, I always gives her some, for I’m of opinion to think that women should stick by one another. But, mind you, I always puts it down in the bill. Sometimes she pays me for what I gives her; sometimes she don’t. But that’s neither here nor there. I can’t bear to see one of the female sect want nothing. I wouldn’t turn Mrs. Sidney into the street with an empty stomach at no price. Poor thing! Women likes their little snacks and meals, and likes ’em often, and must have ’em to keep up their constitution. I, myself, have a sinking

every day about an hour after breakfast, and feel accordingly to want something. So I just takes a bit and a drop, every now-and-then, till dinner comes round at one o'clock. Now, as to Mrs. Sidney——”

But Lady Grace hindered the flow of the landlady's eloquence by asking if Mrs. Sidney was likely to return before night.

“Can't say,” replied Mrs. Ribble, looking up at the Dutch clock ticking at the side of the fire-place. “It's pretty near one o'clock ; if she don't come in afore many more minutes is passed, why I can't reckon on her till nine or ten at night. She always lets herself in. I don't mind trusting her with a key of the street-door, for she never makes no noise, but, on the contrairy, is as quiet as a mouse. I'll just step out o' doors and see if there is any sign of her coming down the row.”

“Thank you,” said Lady Grace. “But before you go,” suggested she, “it would be better, I

think, that I should wait in this Mrs. Sidney's room. If she is the person I suspect her to be, I have some private matters to communicate, which, were we to intrude on your parlour, might be embarrassing to all parties. On the other hand, should your lodger be a stranger to me, I will not fail—after what you have told me of her necessities—to contribute something for her comfort.”

“ You are a good young lady, I can see that,” sagely remarked Mrs. Ribble, warming towards her visitor ; “ and it shall be as you desire. Step up, if you please, ma'am ; I'll show you the way. I've shut the street door, so nobody can't come onawares.”

Lady Grace followed the landlady, and was speedily inducted into the garret of Mrs. Sidney. Two rush-bottomed chairs, a small deal table, and a truckle bed, constituted the whole of the furniture. But everything was neat and clean.

“ You see, ma'am, I've took care to make her

comfortable," observed Mrs. Ribble, placing a chair for her visitor. "I shall now go down and look out for Mrs. Sidney."

"You are very good," responded Lady Grace, willing to encourage the landlady in her present improved mood. "And should you see Mrs. Sidney, merely tell her that a female friend of hers is waiting in her room to speak with her. There will be no harm in this, you know, even should she not prove to be the person I seek."

"Very well, ma'am," rejoined the landlady.

By this time Mrs. Ribble's curiosity was fairly roused beyond control ; and, on descending to the passage, and seeing the footman still standing there, she said, "Hadn't you better walk into my room, and take a seat, sir?"

The servant wondered at the marvellous change which had come over the virago who, half-an-hour before, had so fiercely rated him. But, as he had been on his feet behind the carriage, and at his post in the passage, the offer of

a seat was not unwelcome ; he, therefore, walked at once into the parlour and sat down.

Now, as it was Mrs. Ribble's design to extract some information from him, and as she knew, like all her class, that a little liquor is the best thing in the world to set the tongue in motion, she went to a cupboard and produced a bottle and two wine glasses.

"Come," said she, "you must drink my health, and I must drink your missis's."

The servant shook his head. "I mustn't drink spirits—'specially in a morning," replied he ; "it's more than my place is worth."

"A glass of ale, then, perhaps?" suggested Mrs. Ribble.

"No objection," replied the footman.

Mrs. Ribble took a good-sized jug—sallied forth—and soon returned with some foaming beer.

"'Tis the best," observed she ; "I always has the best, and it's very good indeed at the Mitre."

The servant speedily imbibed the contents of

a couple of tumblers, well filled by the landlady, who thought the time had now arrived for obtaining a little information.

“Your missis,” said she, cautiously approaching the subject, “seems to me to be a good sort of body.”

“She is one of the very best ladies in the world,” replied the man.

“I should think so,” rejoined Mrs. Ribble; “leastways, she behaves herself as such; and I always judges of people as they behaves. ‘Handsome is as handsome does,’ is *my* motto. Not as she ain’t handsome in herself, by no means, for I never see a comelier woman. Ah, our sect is the best part of all creation—no offence to *you*, I hope.”

“None in the least,” responded the footman. “I could sit all day and think it quite a treat to hear my lady praised. You can’t say enough of her, let alone too much. But talking’s

dry work — I'll take another glass, if you please."

"Do, sir, by all means," returned Mrs. Ribble, anxious to bring the man up to the mark. Then, resolving to break ground, she added, "By-the-bye, she told me her name, and I've took and forgot it."

To do her justice, Mrs. Ribble made rather a wry face and a gulp when she uttered this falsehood. But the man was taken off his guard for the moment, and said, "I'll tell you. My mistress is Lady Grace Dalzell, only daughter and heiress of the Earl of Clementsford."

"You don't say so," exclaimed Mrs. Ribble, lifting up her hands in a kind of adoration and wonder; "who'd a-thought it?"

"Why, *you* ought to," replied the servant; "because, you know, by your own account, she told you."

Mrs. Ribble was somewhat taken aback. But she speedily extricated herself, by saying,

“ Lord ! I was in such a flutter when she come, that I didn’t hear one word in ten as she spoke.”

Further conversation was interrupted by the sharp click of the latch lock at the street door.

“ Here she is !” exclaimed Mrs. Ribble.

“ Who ?” interrogated the footman, starting up, and fearing his lady would detect him in the fact of drinking with the woman of the house.

The landlady made no reply, but hurried into the passage, and, after a few whispered words, footsteps were heard ascending the stairs. Mrs. Sidney’s door was opened, and the cousins stood face to face. Clara was dizzy with surprise and fear. A deadly paleness was in her countenance ; she tottered forward a few steps ; her head whirled ; and she would have fallen to the floor, had not Grace caught her in her arms.

“Help ! help !” cried Lady Grace, trembling in every limb ; for *she*, also, trembled, on first seeing her unhappy cousin, now almost transformed by misery. “Help !”

END OF VOL. I.



